E/1999/27
E/CN.6/1999/10

United Nations

Commission on the Status of Women

**Report on the forty-third session
(1–12 March and 1 April 1999)**

Economic and Social Council

**Official Records, 1999
Supplement No. 7**

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United Nations • New York, 1999

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

ISSN 0252-0117

Summary

At its forty-third session, the Commission on the Status of Women recommended one draft resolution to be recommended by the Economic and Social Council for adoption by the General Assembly, and four draft resolutions and three draft decisions for adoption by the Economic and Social Council. In addition, it adopted three resolutions and one decision to be brought to the attention of the Council.

Draft resolution to be recommended by the Economic And Social Council for adoption by the General Assembly

In the draft resolution on an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the General Assembly would adopt and open for signature, ratification and accession the optional protocol to the Convention, the text of which is annexed to the resolution. The Assembly would request the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to hold meetings to exercise its functions under the protocol after its entry into force, in addition to its meetings held under article 20 of the Convention. It would request the Secretary-General to provide the staff and facilities necessary for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee under the Protocol, and to include information on the status of the Protocol in her or his regular reports to the General Assembly on the status of the Convention.

Draft resolutions and decisions recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

In draft resolution I on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, the Council would urge all Afghan parties, in particular the Taliban, to bring to an end without delay all human rights violations against women and girls. It would urge the Secretary-General to ensure that all United Nations activities in Afghanistan are carried out according to the principle of non-discrimination against women and girls, and that a gender perspective and special attention to the human rights of women and girls are fully incorporated into the work of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan.

In draft resolution II on Palestinian women, the Council would request the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to monitor and take action with regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women, and the Beijing Platform for Action. It would request the Secretary-General to continue to review the situation and to assist Palestinian women, and to submit a report to the Commission at its forty-fourth session.

In draft resolution III on the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002–2005, the Council would invite the Secretary-General to formulate the plan for 2002–2005 in two phases. The Council would decide that the first phase, containing an assessment, would be submitted to it through the Commission on the Status of Women in the year 2000, and the new plan for 2002–2005 would be submitted to the Council through the Commission in 2001.

In draft resolution IV on agreed conclusions of the Commission on critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, the Council would endorse the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission with respect to the two critical areas of concern addressed by the Commission at its forty-third session — women and health, and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

In its agreed conclusions on women and health, the Commission reconfirmed the targets identified in the Platform for Action and recommended accelerated efforts for their implementation. The Commission called for the provision of maternal and essential obstetric care, including emergency care. It requested the enactment of laws to eliminate sexual violence against women and girls, and the elimination of stigmatization and social exclusion surrounding infectious diseases. It called for the development of preventive and remedial health services and the provision of appropriate counselling and treatment for mental disorders in women and girls. Research was to be undertaken into the gender differences in the causes and effects of the use and abuse of substances, including narcotic drugs and alcohol, and measures aimed at occupational and environmental health to protect women workers in all sectors, including agricultural and domestic household workers, were outlined. The Commission recommended mainstreaming a gender perspective into the curricula and training of all health-care and service providers, and using the opportunity provided by health sector reform and development to integrate gender analysis systematically into the health sector.

In its agreed conclusions on institutional mechanisms, the Commission requested Governments to ensure that senior management in each ministry or agency take the responsibility for fulfilling gender equality commitments and integrating a gender perspective in all activities, and promote effective monitoring mechanisms. It requested that Governments give visibility to the relationship between remunerated and unremunerated work and its importance to gender analysis. It further urged Governments to ensure that the needs, rights and interests of women were identified and mainstreamed into policy and programme development. The Commission also requested that Governments coordinate with non-governmental organizations and civil society in national and international activities, including elaborating national action plans and implementing the Platform for Action. The international community, including the United Nations, was called upon to implement agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council. It was also called upon to develop gender action plans for the achievement of gender balance in conformity with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat was requested to expand the directory of national machineries to facilitate communication among national machineries around the world.

In draft decision I on enabling the Commission to carry out its mandate, the Council would decide that the Commission should continue to meet annually after the year 2000, for a period of 10 working days.

In draft decision II, the Council would take note of the report of the Commission on its forty-third session and approve the provisional agenda and documentation for its forty-fourth session.

Resolutions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women

In its resolution 43/1 on the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts, the Commission condemned violent acts in contravention of international humanitarian law against civilian women and children, strongly urged all parties to armed conflicts to respect fully those norms, and requested the Secretary-General and all relevant international organizations to pursue the release of those women and children. It also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its forty-fourth session.

In its resolution 43/2 on women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), the Commission urged Governments to create a supportive environment for those infected with HIV, protect the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and enable those who are vulnerable to have access to appropriate counselling services; to take care of and support children orphaned by AIDS; and to adopt a long-term AIDS prevention policy tailored to the needs of women and girls. The Commission urged the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to assist Governments in determining best policies and programmes to prevent women and young girls from becoming infected with HIV/AIDS, and to give priority attention to the situation of women and girls in Africa. It invited the Secretary-General to report to it at its forty-fourth session on the implementation of the resolution.

In its resolution 43/3 on women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups, the Commission invited the World Health Organization, in partnership with other relevant United Nations bodies and agencies and through extrabudgetary resources, to develop and disseminate a training manual on women and girls' mental disorders resulting from trauma, all forms of discrimination, exploitation, abuse and oppression. It urged the Secretary-General, in collaboration with relevant United Nations bodies, to organize, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, regional expert group meetings for developing gender- and age-disaggregated and gender-sensitive psychosocial and mental health situation analyses and indicators for women's mental health. It requested the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of relevant bodies of the United Nations, and invited States members and United Nations agencies concerned to make available relevant information for consideration by the Commission at its forty-fourth session.

Contents

Chapter			Page
I.	Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention		1
	A.	Draft resolution to be recommended by the Council for adoption by the General Assembly	1
		Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	1
	B.	Draft resolutions for adoption by the Council	7
		I. Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan	7
		II. Palestinian women	9
		III. System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002–2005	11
		IV. Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action	11
	C.	Draft decisions for adoption by the Council	23
		I. Enabling the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to carry out its mandate	23
		II. Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its forty-third session and provisional agenda and documentation for the forty-fourth session of the Commission	23
		III. Extraordinary meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women	25
	D.	Matters brought to the attention of the Council	25
		Resolution 43/1. Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts	25
		Resolution 43/2. Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome	26
		Resolution 43/3. Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups	28
		Decision 43/101. Documents considered by the Commission on the Status of Women under agenda item 3	30
II.	Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women		31
III.	Initiation of the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action and preparation for the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000		40
IV.	Communications concerning the status of women		41
V.	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention		44

VI. Provisional agenda for the forty-fourth session of the Commission 46

VII. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its forty-third session 47

VIII. Organization of the session 48

A. Opening and duration of the session 48

B. Attendance 48

C. Election of officers 48

D. Agenda and organization of work 48

E. Consultations with non-governmental organizations 49

Annexes

I. Summaries of the panel discussions on the critical areas of concern 51

II. Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 56

III. Attendance 72

IV. List of documents before the Commission at its forty-third session 76

Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution to be recommended by the Council for adoption by the General Assembly

1. The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the approval of the following draft resolution for adoption by the General Assembly:

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*

The Economic and Social Council

Recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Reaffirming* the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action[1] and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[2]

"*Recalling* that the Beijing Platform for Action, pursuant to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, supported the process initiated by the Commission on the Status of Women with a view to elaborating a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[3] that could enter into force as soon as possible on a right to petition procedure,

"*Noting* that the Beijing Platform for Action also called on all States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so as soon as possible so that universal ratification of the Convention can be achieved by the year 2000,

"1. *Adopts and opens for signature, ratification and accession* the Optional Protocol to the Convention, the text of which is annexed to the present resolution;

"2. *Calls upon* all States which have signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention to sign and ratify or to accede to the Protocol as soon as possible;

"3. *Stresses* that States Parties to the Protocol should undertake to respect the rights and procedures provided by the Protocol and cooperate with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at all stages of its proceedings under the Protocol;

"4. *Stresses* that in the fulfilment of its mandate as well as its functions under the Protocol, the Committee should continue to be guided by the principles of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity;

"5. *Requests* the Committee to hold meetings to exercise its functions under the Protocol after its entry into force, in addition to its meetings held under article 20 of the Convention. The duration of such meetings shall be determined and, if

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* For the discussion, see chap. V.

[1] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[2] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

[3] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

necessary, reviewed by a meeting of the States Parties to the Protocol, subject to the approval of the General Assembly;

"6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the staff and facilities necessary for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee under the Protocol after its entry into force;

"7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include information on the status of the Protocol in her or his regular reports submitted to the General Assembly on the status of the Convention.

"Annex

"Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

"*The States Parties to this Protocol,*

"*Noting* that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women,

"*Noting* that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[4] proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex,

"*Recalling* that the International Covenants on Human Rights[5] and other international human rights instruments prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex,

"*Also recalling* the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[3] ("the Convention"), in which the States Parties thereto condemn discrimination against women in all its forms and agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women,

"*Reaffirming* their determination to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to take effective action to prevent violations of these rights and freedoms,

"*Have agreed as follows:*

"Article 1

"A State Party to this Protocol ("State Party") recognizes the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ("the Committee") to receive and consider communications submitted in accordance with article 2.

"Article 2

"Communications may be submitted by or on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals, under the jurisdiction of a State Party, claiming to be victims of a violation of any of the rights set forth in the Convention by that State Party. Where a communication is submitted on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals, this

[4] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[5] General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

shall be with their consent unless the author can justify acting on their behalf without such consent.

"Article 3

"Communications shall be in writing and shall not be anonymous. No communication shall be received by the Committee if it concerns a State Party to the Convention that is not a party to this Protocol.

"Article 4

"1. The Committee shall not consider a communication unless it has ascertained that all available domestic remedies have been exhausted unless the application of such remedies is unreasonably prolonged or unlikely to bring effective relief.

"2. The Committee shall declare a communication inadmissible where:

(i) The same matter has already been examined by the Committee or has been or is being examined under another procedure of international investigation or settlement;

(ii) It is incompatible with the provisions of the Convention;

(iii) It is manifestly ill-founded or not sufficiently substantiated;

(iv) It is an abuse of the right to submit a communication;

(v) The facts that are the subject of the communication occurred prior to the entry into force of this Protocol for the State Party concerned unless those facts continued after that date.

"Article 5

"1. At any time after the receipt of a communication and before a determination on the merits has been reached, the Committee may transmit to the State Party concerned for its urgent consideration a request that the State Party take such interim measures as may be necessary to avoid possible irreparable damage to the victim or victims of the alleged violation.

"2. Where the Committee exercises its discretion under paragraph 1 of this article, this does not imply a determination on admissibility or on the merits of the communication.

"Article 6

"1. Unless the Committee considers a communication inadmissible without reference to the State Party concerned, and provided that the individual or individuals consent to the disclosure of their identity to that State Party, the Committee shall bring any communication submitted to it under this Protocol confidentially to the attention of the State Party concerned.

"2. Within six months, the receiving State Party shall submit to the Committee written explanations or statements clarifying the matter and the remedy, if any, that may have been provided by that State Party.

"Article 7

"1. The Committee shall consider communications received under this Protocol in the light of all information made available to it by or on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals and by the State Party concerned, provided that this information is transmitted to the parties concerned.

"2. The Committee shall hold closed meetings when examining communications under this Protocol.

"3. After examining a communication, the Committee shall transmit its views on the communication, together with its recommendations, if any, to the parties concerned.

"4. The State Party shall give due consideration to the views of the Committee, together with its recommendations, if any, and shall submit to the Committee, within six months, a written response, including information on any action taken in the light of the views and recommendations of the Committee.

"5. The Committee may invite the State Party to submit further information about any measures the State Party has taken in response to its views or recommendations, if any, including as deemed appropriate by the Committee, in the State Party's subsequent reports under article 18 of the Convention.

"Article 8

"1. If the Committee receives reliable information indicating grave or systematic violations by a State Party of rights set forth in the Convention, the Committee shall invite that State Party to cooperate in the examination of the information and to this end to submit observations with regard to the information concerned.

"2. Taking into account any observations that may have been submitted by the State Party concerned as well as any other reliable information available to it, the Committee may designate one or more of its members to conduct an inquiry and to report urgently to the Committee. Where warranted and with the consent of the State Party, the inquiry may include a visit to its territory.

"3. After examining the findings of such an inquiry, the Committee shall transmit these findings to the State Party concerned together with any comments and recommendations.

"4. The State Party concerned shall, within six months of receiving the findings, comments and recommendations transmitted by the Committee, submit its observations to the Committee.

"5. Such an inquiry shall be conducted confidentially and the cooperation of that State Party shall be sought at all stages of the proceedings.

"Article 9

"1. The Committee may invite the State Party concerned to include in its report under article 18 of the Convention details of any measures taken in response to an inquiry conducted under article 8 of this Protocol.

"2. The Committee may, if necessary, after the end of the period of six months referred to in article 8.4, invite the State Party concerned to inform it of the measures taken in response to such an inquiry.

"Article 10

"1. Each State Party may, at the time of signature or ratification of this Protocol or accession thereto, declare that it does not recognize the competence of the Committee provided for in articles 8 and 9.

"2. Any State Party having made a declaration in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article may, at any time, withdraw this declaration by notification to the Secretary-General.

"Article 11

"A State Party shall take all appropriate steps to ensure that individuals under its jurisdiction are not subjected to ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of communicating with the Committee pursuant to this Protocol.

"Article 12

"The Committee shall include in its annual report under article 21 of the Convention a summary of its activities under this Protocol.

"Article 13

"Each State Party undertakes to make widely known and to give publicity to the Convention and this Protocol and to facilitate access to information about the views and recommendations of the Committee, in particular, on matters involving that State Party.

"Article 14

"The Committee shall develop its own rules of procedure to be followed when exercising the functions conferred on it by this Protocol.

"Article 15

"1. This Protocol shall be open for signature by any State that has signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention.

"2. This Protocol shall be subject to ratification by any State that has ratified or acceded to the Convention. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

"3. This Protocol shall be open to accession by any State that has ratified or acceded to the Convention.

"4. Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

"Article 16

"1. This Protocol shall enter into force three months after the date of the deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the tenth instrument of ratification or accession.

"2. For each State ratifying this Protocol or acceding to it after its entry into force, this Protocol shall enter into force three months after the date of the deposit of its own instrument of ratification or accession.

"Article 17

"No reservations to this Protocol shall be permitted.

"Article 18

"1. Any State Party may propose an amendment to this Protocol and file it with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General shall thereupon communicate any proposed amendments to the States Parties with a request that they notify her/him whether they favour a conference of States Parties for the purpose of considering and voting on the proposal. In the event that at least one third of the States Parties favour such a conference, the Secretary-General shall convene the conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Any amendment adopted by a majority of the States Parties present and voting at the conference shall be submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations for approval.

"2. Amendments shall come into force when they have been approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations and accepted by a two-thirds majority of the States Parties to this Protocol in accordance with their respective constitutional processes.

"3. When amendments come into force, they shall be binding on those States Parties that have accepted them, other States Parties still being bound by the provisions of this Protocol and any earlier amendments that they have accepted.

"Article 19

"1. Any State Party may denounce this Protocol at any time by written notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Denunciation shall take effect six months after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General.

"2. Denunciation shall be without prejudice to the continued application of the provisions of this Protocol to any communication submitted under article 2 or any inquiry initiated under article 8 before the effective date of denunciation.

"Article 20

"The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall inform all States of:

(a) Signatures, ratifications and accessions under this Protocol;

(b) The date of entry into force of this Protocol and of any amendment under article 18;

(c) Any denunciation under article 19.

"Article 21

"1. This Protocol, of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the United Nations.

"2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall transmit certified copies of this Protocol to all States referred to in article 25 of the Convention."

B. Draft resolutions for adoption by the Council

2. The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I

Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan*

The Economic and Social Council,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[6] the International Covenants on Human Rights,[7] the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,[8] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[9] the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[10] the Beijing Declaration[11] and Platform for Action[12] adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and other instruments of human rights and international humanitarian law,

Recalling that Afghanistan is a party to the Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide,[13] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[7] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[7] the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,[14] and that it has signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[15]

Deeply concerned about the continuing deterioration of the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, in particular in all areas under the control of the Taliban movement, as documented by the continued and substantiated reports of grave violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination against them, such as denial of access to health care, to all levels and types of education, to employment outside the home and, in repeated instances, to humanitarian aid, as well as restrictions upon their freedom of movement,

Welcoming the ongoing work of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, in particular his special focus on violations of the human rights of women and girls, especially in territories under the control of the Taliban faction,

Noting with concern the detrimental impact of these harmful conditions on the well-being of Afghan women and the children in their care,

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* For the discussion, see chap. II.

[6] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[7] General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[8] General Assembly resolution 39/46, annex.

[9] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

[10] General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

[11] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

[12] Ibid.

[13] General Assembly resolution 260 A (III).

[14] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

[15] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

Welcoming the inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan in November 1997, conducted by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, taking into account the report on the mission and hoping that the mission will serve as a model for future efforts to address the gender dimension of crisis/conflict situations,

Expressing its appreciation for the international community's support of and solidarity with the women and girls of Afghanistan, being supportive of the women of Afghanistan who protest violations of their human rights, and encouraging women and men worldwide to continue efforts to draw attention to their situation and to promote the immediate restoration of their ability to enjoy their human rights,

1. *Condemns* the continuing grave violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination and violence against them, in all areas of Afghanistan, particularly in areas under the control of the Taliban;

2. *Also condemns* the Taliban's denial of women's access to health care and the systematic violation of the human rights of women in Afghanistan, including the denial of access to education and to employment outside their home, freedom of movement, and freedom from intimidation, harassment and violence, which has a serious detrimental impact on the well-being of Afghan women and the children in their care;

3. *Urges* the Taliban and other Afghan parties to recognize, protect, promote and act in accordance with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion, in accordance with international human rights instruments, and to respect international humanitarian law;

4. *Urges* all the Afghan parties, in particular the Taliban, to bring to an end without delay all human rights violations against women and girls and to take urgent measures to ensure:

(a) The repeal of all legislative and other measures that discriminate against women;

(b) The effective participation of women in civil, cultural, economic, political and social life;

(c) Respect for the equal right of women to work and their reintegration in employment;

(d) The equal right of women and girls to education without discrimination, the reopening of schools and the admission of women and girls to all levels of education;

(e) Respect for the right of women to security of person and that those responsible for physical attacks on women are brought to justice;

(f) Respect for freedom of movement for women;

(g) Respect for women's and girls' equal access to health care;

5. *Encourages* the continuing efforts of the United Nations, international and non-governmental organizations and donors to ensure that all United Nations-assisted programmes in Afghanistan are formulated and coordinated in such a way as to promote and ensure the participation of women in those programmes, and that women benefit equally with men from such programmes;

6. *Appeals* to all States and to the international community to ensure that all humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan, in conformity with the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan, is based on the principle of non-discrimination, integrates a gender perspective, and actively attempts to promote the participation of both women and men and to promote peace and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

7. *Urges* States to continue to give special attention to the promotion and protection of human rights of women in Afghanistan and to mainstream a gender perspective into all aspects of their policies and actions related to Afghanistan;

8. *Welcomes* the establishment of the positions of Gender Adviser and Human Rights Adviser at the United Nations Office of the Resident Coordinator for Afghanistan, in order to ensure more effective consideration and implementation of human rights and gender concerns into all United Nations programmes within Afghanistan, taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan conducted by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women in November 1997;

9. *Urges* the Secretary-General to ensure that all United Nations activities in Afghanistan are carried out according to the principle of non-discrimination against women and girls, and that a gender perspective and special attention to the human rights of women and girls are fully incorporated into the work of the civil affairs unit established within the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, including the training and selection of staff;

10. *Stresses* the importance of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan giving special attention to the human rights of women and girls and fully incorporating a gender perspective in his work;

11. *Appeals* to States and the international community to implement the recommendations of the inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan under the leadership of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women;

12. *Urges* all Afghan factions, in particular the Taliban, to ensure the safety and protection of all United Nations and humanitarian workers in Afghanistan and to allow them, regardless of gender, to carry out their work unhindered.

Draft resolution II

Palestinian women*

The Economic and Social Council,

Having considered with appreciation the section concerning the situation of Palestinian women and assistance provided by organizations of the United Nations system of the report of the Secretary-General[16] on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration[11] and Platform for Action,[12]

Recalling the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,[17] in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women and children, and the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women,

Also recalling its resolution 1998/10 of 28 July 1998 and other relevant United Nations resolutions,

Further recalling the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women[18] as it concerns the protection of civilian populations,

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* For the discussion, see chap. II.

[16] E/CN.6/1999/2, sect. IV.A.

[17] *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15–26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

[18] General Assembly resolution 48/104.

Gravely concerned at the suspension, on 20 December 1998, by the Government of Israel of the implementation of the Wye River Memorandum, signed at Washington, D.C., on 23 October 1998, including the negotiations on the final settlement, which should be concluded by May 1999,

Concerned about the continuing difficult situation of Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and about the severe consequences of continuous illegal Israeli settlements activities, as well as the harsh economic conditions and other consequences for the situation of Palestinian women and their families, resulting from the frequent closures and isolation of the occupied territory,

1. *Stresses* its support for the Middle East peace process and the need for speedy and full implementation of the agreements already reached between the parties;

2. *Affirms* that in spite of the actual deterioration of the Middle East peace process as a result of the lack of compliance by the Government of Israel with the existing agreements, increased efforts must be exerted to bring the peace process back on track towards the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region and the achievement of tangible results towards the improvement of the situation of Palestinian women and their families;

3. *Reaffirms* that the Israeli occupation remains a major obstacle for Palestinian women with regard to their advancement, self-reliance and integration in the development planning of their society;

4. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply fully with the provisions and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[6] the Regulations annexed to The Hague Convention of 1907[19] and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949,[14] in order to protect the rights of Palestinian women and their families;

5. *Calls upon* Israel to facilitate the return of all refugees and displaced Palestinian women and children to their homes and properties in the occupied Palestinian territory, in compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

6. *Urges* Member States, financial organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other relevant institutions to intensify their efforts to provide financial and technical assistance to Palestinian women for the creation of projects responding to their needs, especially during the transitional period;

7. *Requests* the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to monitor and take action with regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women and children, and the Beijing Platform for Action;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to review the situation and to assist Palestinian women by all available means, and to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

[19] See Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915).

Draft resolution III

System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002–2005*

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 1996/34 of 25 July 1996 on the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996–2001 in which it called for a new draft plan to cover the period 2002–2005,

Considering that the new draft plan should take into consideration the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on progress achieved in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action,[12]

1. *Invites* the Secretary-General, in his capacity as chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to formulate the plan for 2002–2005 in two phases — a first phase consisting of an assessment of activities undertaken by the United Nations system and of obstacles encountered and lessons learned from the present plan and the system-wide process of its implementation, and the second phase consisting of a new plan that reflects the growing emphasis on action and delivery;

2. *Decides* that the assessment should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on the Status of Women in the year 2000 and that the new plan for 2002–2005 should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission in 2001.

Draft resolution IV

Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action*

The Economic and Social Council

Endorses the following agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women with respect to the two critical areas of concern addressed by the Commission at its forty-third session:

I. Women and health

The Commission on the Status of Women

1. *Reaffirms* the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women,[20] notably chapter IV.C on women and health, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development[21] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;[22]

2. *Recalls* the Constitution of the World Health Organization, which states that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity; that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race,

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* For the discussion, see chap. II.

[20] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

[21] See *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18).

[22] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

religion, political belief, economic or social condition; and that the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest cooperation of individuals and States;

3. *Requests* States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to consider, when preparing their initial and periodic reports under the Convention, including on article 12, general recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;

4. *Acknowledges* that the realization by women of their right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is an integral part of the full realization by them of all human rights, and that the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights;

5. *Acknowledges* the link between women's physical and mental health throughout the life cycle and the level of national development, including the availability of basic social services such as health services, women's status and degree of empowerment in society, employment and work, poverty, illiteracy, ageing, race and ethnicity, and violence in all its forms, in particular harmful attitudes and traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women, as well as the importance of investing in women's health for the well-being of women themselves and for the development of society as a whole;

6 *Recognizes* that lack of development is a major obstacle for women in many countries and that the international economic environment, through its impact on national economies, affects the capacity of many countries to provide and expand quality health services to women; further significant obstacles include competing governmental priorities and inadequate resources;

7. *Proposes,* in order to accelerate the implementation of the strategic objectives of chapter IV.C of the Beijing Platform for Action, that the following actions be taken:

Actions to be taken by Governments, the United Nations system and civil society, as appropriate

1. Universal access, on a basis of equality between women and men, to quality, comprehensive and affordable health care and health services and information by women throughout the life cycle

(a) Ensure universal access on a basis of equality between women and men to appropriate, affordable and quality health care and health services for women throughout the life cycle;

(b) In order to bridge the gap between commitments and implementation, formulate policies favourable to investments in women's health and intensify efforts to meet the targets identified in the Platform for Action;

(c) Ensure universal access for women throughout the life cycle, on a basis of equality between women and men, to social services related to health care, including education, clean water and safe sanitation, nutrition, food security and health education programmes;

(d) Integrate sexual, reproductive and mental health services, with emphasis on preventative measures, within the primary health-care system to respond to the broad health needs of women and men, in a life-cycle approach;

(e) Design and implement programmes, with the full involvement of young people, to educate and inform them on sexual and reproductive health issues, taking into account the rights of the child to access to information, privacy, confidentiality, respect and informed consent, and the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents and legal guardians;

(f) Allocate and reallocate, where appropriate, adequate resources to put in place the necessary measures which ensure that quality health services are accessible to those women throughout their life cycle who are living in poverty, are disadvantaged or socially excluded;

(g) Increase efforts directed towards poverty eradication, by assessing the impact of broader macroeconomic policies on the feminization of poverty and on women's health; and address the health needs of those vulnerable, throughout their life span;

(h) Adopt preventive and promotional health policies at an early stage where possible in order to prevent health problems and dependence of older women and enable them to lead independent and healthy lives;

(i) Ensure that special attention is given to supporting women with disabilities, and empower them to lead independent and healthy lives;

(j) Address the need for appropriate screening services for women, within the context of national health priorities;

(k) Encourage women to practise regular sport and recreational activities which have a positive impact on women's health, well-being and fitness throughout the whole life cycle, and ensure that women enjoy equal opportunities to practise sport, use sport facilities and take part in competitions.

2. Sexual and reproductive health

(a) Accelerate efforts for the implementation of the targets established in the Beijing Platform for Action with regard to universal access to quality and affordable health services, including reproductive and sexual health, reduction of persistently high maternal mortality and infant and child mortality[20] and reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition and iron deficiency anaemia,[23] as well as to provide maternal and essential obstetric care, including emergency care, and implement existing and develop new strategies to prevent maternal deaths, caused by, *inter alia,* infections, malnutrition, hypertension during pregnancy, unsafe abortion[24] and post-partum haemorrhage, and child deaths, taking into account the Safe Motherhood Initiative;

(b) Promote and support breastfeeding unless it is medically contra-indicated, as well as implement the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative;

(c) Support scientific research into and the development of safe, affordable, effective and easily accessible female-controlled methods of family planning, including dual methods such as microbicides and female condoms that protect against both sexually transmitted diseases and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and prevent pregnancy, taking into account paragraph 96 of the report of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

[23] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women* ..., para. 106 (w).

[24] Ibid., para. 106 (k).

(d) Support the development and widespread use of male contraceptive methods;

(e) Educate women and men, particularly young people, with a view to encouraging men to accept their responsibilities in matters related to sexuality, reproduction and child-rearing and to promoting equal relationships between women and men;

(f) Enhance women's ability and knowledge, and empower them to make informed choices, to prevent unwanted pregnancies;

(g) Work with the media and other sectors to encourage the development of positive attitudes about major transitions in women's and girls' reproductive lives, such as the onset of menstruation and menopause, and provide appropriate support, where needed, for women undergoing these transitions;

(h) Eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation, and other harmful traditional and customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, since such practices constitute a definite form of violence against women and girls and a serious form of violation of their human rights, including through development of appropriate policies and enactment and/or reinforcement of legislation, and ensure development of appropriate tools of education and advocacy and adopt legislation outlawing their practice by medical personnel;

(i) Take all necessary measures to prevent all harmful practices, such as early marriages, forced marriages and threats to women's right to life.

3. HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and other infectious diseases

(a) Support public education and advocacy and secure the highest level of political commitment to the prevention of and research into sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, their care, treatment and the mitigation of their impact, including through the provision of social services and support, together with poverty alleviation;

(b) Increase prevention measures to reduce the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic worldwide and sexually transmitted diseases among the groups most heavily at risk, in particular young people, including through education and awareness-raising campaigns and improved access to high-quality condoms and improved accessibility to anti-retroviral therapy to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and treatment, care and support for HIV/AIDS-related illnesses;

(c) Enact laws and take measures to eliminate sexual violence against women and girls, which is one of the causes of HIV/AIDS infection and other sexually transmitted diseases, and review and enact laws and combat practices, as appropriate, that may contribute to women's susceptibility to these infections, including enacting legislation against those sociocultural practices that contribute to AIDS, and implement legislation, policies and practices to protect women, adolescents and young girls from discrimination related to HIV/AIDS;

(d) Eliminate the stigmatization and social exclusion that surround HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and other infectious diseases such as leprosy and filariasis, and lead to under-detection, lack of treatment and violence, especially for women, so that infected women who reveal their HIV status are protected from violence, stigmatization and other negative consequences;

(e) Increase the preventative, as well as the therapeutic, measures against tuberculosis and malaria, and accelerate the research into the development of a vaccine against malaria, which has a harmful effect especially on pregnant women in most parts of the world, particularly in Africa;

(f) Educate, counsel and encourage men and women infected with HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases to inform their partners to help protect them from infection, and ensure that the spread of these diseases is curtailed.

4. Mental health and substance abuse

(a) Make available gender-sensitive and age-sensitive mental health services and counselling, as necessary, with particular attention to the treatment of psychiatric illness and trauma throughout the life cycle, *inter alia*, by integrating them into primary health-care systems and through appropriate referral support;

(b) Develop effective preventive and remedial health services to provide appropriate counselling and treatment for mental disorders related to stress, depression, powerlessness, marginalization and trauma since women and girls may suffer more from these ailments resulting from various forms of discrimination, violence and sexual exploitation, particularly in situations of armed conflict and displacement;

(c) Support research and dissemination of information on gender differences in the causes and effects of the use and abuse of substances, including narcotic drugs and alcohol, and develop effective gender-sensitive approaches to prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, including those specifically designed for pregnant women;

(d) Design, implement and strengthen prevention programmes aimed at reducing tobacco use by women and girls; investigate the exploitation and targeting of young women by the tobacco industry; support action to prohibit tobacco advertising and access by minors to tobacco products; and support smoke-free spaces, gender-sensitive cessation programmes, and product labelling to warn of the dangers of tobacco use, noting the Tobacco Free Initiative proposed by the World Health Organization in July 1998;

(e) Promote equitable sharing of household and family responsibilities between women and men, and provide social support systems, where appropriate, to help women who, as a result of their multiple roles in the family, often may suffer from fatigue and stress;

(f) Support research on the relationship between women's and girls' physical and mental health, self-esteem and the extent to which women of all ages are valued in their societies to address issues such as substance abuse and eating disorders.

5. Occupational and environmental health

(a) Support for gender-specific research on the short- and long-term effects of the occupational and environmental health risks of work, including work in the formal and informal sector, performed by both women and men, and take effective legal and other measures to reduce these risks, including risks in the workplace, in the environment and from harmful chemicals, including pesticides, radiation, toxic waste and other such hazards that affect women's health;

(b) Protect the health of women workers in all sectors, including agricultural and domestic household workers, through effective environmental and occupational health policies for gender-sensitive work environments, free from sexual harassment and discrimination, which are safe and ergonomically designed to prevent occupational hazards;

(c) Take specific measures to protect the health of women workers who are pregnant or have recently given birth or are breastfeeding from harmful environmental and occupational hazards, and their children;

(d) Provide full and accurate information about environmental health risks to the public, in particular to women, and take steps to ensure access to clean water, adequate sanitation and clean air.

6. **Policy development, research, training and evaluation**

(a) Advance a comprehensive interdisciplinary and collaborative research agenda on women's health which encompasses the entire life span of all women, including women from special and diverse groups within populations;

(b) Establish concrete accountability mechanisms at the national level for reporting on the implementation of the health and other related critical areas of the Platform for Action;

(c) Improve the collection, use and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex and age, and research findings, and develop collection methodologies that capture the differences between women's and men's life experiences, including through the use and, where necessary, further coordinated development of gender-specific qualitative and quantitative health indicators that go beyond morbidity, mortality and social indicators, capturing quality of life, social as well as mental well-being of women and girls;

(d) Promote research on the interrelationship between poverty, ageing and gender;

(e) Ensure participation of women at all levels in the planning, implementation and evaluation of health programmes; ensure also a gender perspective in the health sector at all levels, including through the elaboration of gender- and age-sensitive health policies and budgets, and the creation of an enabling environment supported by a legislative framework and monitoring, follow-up and evaluation mechanisms within individual countries;

(f) Mainstream a gender perspective into the curricula as well as the training of all health-care and service providers in order to ensure high-quality health services for women that can help eliminate discriminatory attitudes and practices by certain health professionals which impede women's access to health services; and ensure that a gender perspective is developed and applied to treatment and prevention practice in the health sector;

(g) In order to ensure that women's rights are addressed, the curricula of health-care providers should include relevant human rights topics to strengthen medical ethics and ensure that girls and women are treated with respect and dignity;

(h) Increase education and research among health service providers and users to address the unnecessary medicalization of women's health conditions;

(i) Ensure, where indicated, that clinical trials of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and other medical products include women with their full knowledge and consent and ensure that the resulting data is analysed for sex and gender differences;

(j) Collect data concerning scientific and legal developments on human genome and related genetic research and their implications for women's health and women's rights in general and disseminate such information and results of studies conducted in accordance with accepted ethical standards.

7. Health sector reform and development

(a) Take action, in the context of health sector reform and development and growing diversification of the provision of care, to secure equal and equitable access to care for women and to ensure that health sector reform and development efforts promote women's health; and address under-provision of health care;

(b) Take the opportunity provided by health sector reform and development to systematically integrate the process of gender analysis in the health sector and undertake gender impact assessments and monitoring of all health sector reforms and development to ensure that women benefit equally from them;

(c) Develop strategies designed to seek to reduce occupational concentration by gender to eliminate gender-based pay inequality, to ensure high-quality working conditions in the health work force, and to provide appropriate skills training and development.

8. International cooperation

(a) Assure a strong political commitment by the international community to implement strengthened international cooperation for development and to mobilize domestic and international finance resources from all sources for development and the provision of health services for women;

(b) Promote progress in regard to external debt relief which, with improvement in the terms of trade, could help generate resources, both public and private, to expand and upgrade health services, with special attention to the physical and mental health of women;

(c) Encourage the international community, including bilateral donors and multilateral development organizations, to assist developing countries in ensuring the provision of basic social services, including health-care services for women, in particular during periods of economic difficulty; socially and gender-sensitive approaches to structural adjustment policies are further encouraged;

(d) Encourage concerted efforts, through enhanced cooperation and coordination to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the benefits of globalization and interdependence, to, *inter alia,* enhance the provision of health-care services in developing countries, especially for women;

(e) In the framework of international cooperation encourage sound macroeconomic policies and institutions to, *inter alia,* support the provision of health-care services for women.

II. Institutional mechanisms

The Commission on the Status of Women

1. *Reaffirms* the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women,[25] notably chapter IV.H on institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[26] and Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system;[27]

2. *Recognizes* that the effectiveness and sustainability of national machineries are highly dependent on their embeddedness in the national context, the political and socio-economic system and the needs of and accountability to women, including those with the least access to resources; in addition, recognizes that sharing information at the regional and international levels is crucial for strengthening national machineries and other related institutional mechanisms; that gender equality is advanced through the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for democracy, peace and development; and that the full involvement of women and men is essential;

3. *Further recognizes* that gender mainstreaming is a tool for effective policy-making at all levels and not a substitute for targeted, women-specific policies and programmes, equality legislation, national machineries for the advancement of women and the establishment of gender focal points;

4. *Acknowledges* that national machineries are necessary for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action; and that for national machineries to be effective, clear mandates, location at the highest possible level, accountability mechanisms, partnership with civil society, a transparent political process, adequate financial and human resources and continued strong political commitment are crucial;

5. *Stresses* the importance of international cooperation in order to assist the work of national mechanisms in all countries especially developing countries;

6. *Welcomes* Economic and Social Council decision 1998/298, by which the Council decided to devote the high-level segment of its 1999 substantive session to the advancement of women;

7. *Proposes*, in order to accelerate the implementation of the strategic objectives of chapter IV.H of the Beijing Platform for Action, that the following action be taken:

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[25] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

[26] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

[27] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3), chap. IV, sect. A, para. 4.

Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality

1. Actions to be taken by Governments

(a) Provide continued strong political commitment to supporting the strengthening of national machineries and the advancement of women;

(b) Ensure that national machineries are placed at the highest possible level of government and all institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women are invested with the authority needed to fulfil their mandated roles and responsibilities;

(c) Provide adequate and sustainable financial and human resources to national machineries and other institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women through national budgets, while also granting national machinery the possibility of attracting funds from other bodies for the purpose of specific projects;

(d) Structure appropriately the functions of national machineries at all levels in order to ensure effectiveness in gender mainstreaming;

(e) Ensure that mainstreaming a gender perspective is fully understood, institutionalized and implemented. These efforts should include promoting awareness and understanding of the Platform for Action;

(f) Continue to take steps to ensure that the integration of a gender perspective in the mainstream of all government activities is part of a dual and complementary strategy to achieve gender equality. This includes a continuing need for targeted priorities, policies, programmes and positive action measures;

(g) Ensure that senior management in each ministry or agency takes responsibility for fulfilling gender equality commitments and integrating a gender perspective in all activities, and that appropriate assistance from gender experts or gender focal points is available;

(h) Promote and ensure, as appropriate, the establishment of effective gender focal points at all decision-making levels and in all ministries and other decision-making bodies, develop close collaboration among them and create follow-up mechanisms;

(i) Create and/or encourage the creation and strengthening of institutional mechanisms at all levels, including taking all measures to ensure that national machineries as well as focal points within specific institutions are not marginalized in the administrative structure but supported at the highest possible level of government and entrusted with clearly defined mandates which define their function as a policy advisory body;

(j) Promote capacity-building including gender training for both women and men in government ministries so as to be more responsive to the needs and interests of women and gender equality, and develop their own capacity by making use of available national and international models and methodologies in the field of gender equality;

(k) Promote, where appropriate, and ensure accountability and transparency of government through effective monitoring mechanisms and tools such as gender-disaggregated statistics, gender budgeting, gender auditing and gender impact

assessment, based on established benchmarks, and other performance indicators and regular public reporting, including under international agreements;

(l) Provide assistance, as appropriate, to agencies including those outside government in formulating gender-sensitive performance indicators, necessary to measure and review progress made in the field of gender equality, including the advancement of women and gender mainstreaming;

(m) Continuously improve the gathering and disaggregation of data and the development of statistics and indicators in all critical areas of the Platform for Action for use in analysis, policy development and planning;

(n) Give visibility to the relationship between remunerated and unremunerated work and its importance to gender analysis, and promote greater understanding among relevant ministries and organizations by developing methods for assessing its value in quantitative terms in order to develop appropriate policies in this respect;

(o) Recognize and acknowledge that unremunerated work by women in, for example agriculture, food production, natural resources management, caring for dependants and household and voluntary work, is a considerable contribution to society. Develop and improve mechanisms, for example time-use studies, to measure in quantitative terms unremunerated work in order to:

- Make visible the unequal distribution between women and men of remunerated and unremunerated work in order to promote changes;
- Assess the real value of unremunerated work and accurately reflect it in satellite or other official accounts that are separate from but consistent with core national accounts;

(p) Strengthen the relations among civil society, all governmental agencies and national machineries;

(q) Ensure that the needs, rights and interests of all women, including those who are not members of organizations, and live in poverty in rural and urban areas, are identified and mainstreamed into policy and programme development. This should be done in ways that value the diversity of women and recognize the barriers many women face that prohibit and prevent their participation in public policy development;

(r) Respect the involvement of non-governmental organizations in assisting Governments in the implementation of regional, national and international commitments through advocacy and raising awareness of gender equality issues. Women should be actively involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action;

(s) Coordinate or consult with, as appropriate, non-governmental organizations and civil society in national and international activities including elaborating national action plans, preparing reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and implementing the Platform for Action;

(t) Ensure transparency through open and participatory dialogue and the promotion of balanced participation of women and men in all areas of decision-making;

(u) Support autonomous organizations and institutions involved in research, analysis and evaluation of activities on gender issues and use the results to influence the transformation of policies and programmes;

(v) Create clear anti-discrimination regulations with adequate mechanisms, including a proper legal framework for addressing violations;

(w) Initiate, where necessary, gender equality legislation and create or strengthen, where appropriate, independent bodies, such as the ombudsperson and equal opportunity commission, with responsibility and authority for *inter alia*, promoting and ensuring compliance with gender equality legislation;

(x) Involve parliaments and, wherever appropriate, the judiciary in monitoring progress in gender mainstreaming and strengthening gender-related aspects of all government reporting, and ensure transparency through open and participatory dialogue and the promotion of balanced participation of women and men in all areas and at all levels of decision-making.

2. **Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms**

(a) Design, promote the implementation of, execute, monitor, evaluate and mobilize support for policies that promote the advancement of women and advocate gender equality and promote public debate;

(b) Act as catalysts for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes and not necessarily as agents for policy implementation. However, national machineries are partners in policy formulation and may also choose to implement and coordinate specific projects;

(c) Assist other parts of Government in taking specific actions in the gathering and disaggregation of data and the development of statistics and indicators in all critical areas of the Platform for Action for use in analysis, policy development, planning and programming;

(d) Promote research and dissemination of research findings and information on women and gender equality, including disparities of income and workload between women and men and, where appropriate, among women;

(e) Take specific actions, *inter alia*, the establishment of documentation centres, to disseminate gender-relevant data and other information, including on the important contribution of women to society and research results in easily accessible formats and places in order to promote more informed public dialogue, including through the media, on gender equality and issues pertinent to the advancement of women;

(f) Ensure the ongoing training on gender issues, at all levels, of the personnel of the national machineries to promote programme and policy sustainability;

(g) Develop, as appropriate, policies to recruit technical staff with expertise in gender equality issues;

(h) Create or strengthen collaborative links with other agencies at local, regional, national and international levels;

(i) Recognize civil society as an important source of support and legitimacy and therefore create and strengthen the relationship with civil society through regular consultations with non-governmental organizations, the research community, social partners and other concerned groups. This will create a strong basis for gender-sensitive policy and the advancement of women;

(j) Establish partnerships, liaise and consult with women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, the media and other agencies on national and international policies relating to women and gender and inform them of the international commitments of their Governments;

(k) Engage the media in dialogue aimed at re-examining gender stereotypes and negative portrayal of both women and men;

(l) Create and strengthen collaborative relationships with the private sector, including through initiating advocacy dialogue and advising private companies to address the issues affecting women in the paid labour force, and set up ways and means to promote equality of women and men.

3. Actions to be taken by the international community, including the United Nations system

(a) Implement Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2;

(b) Implement fully the revised system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women (1996–2001);

(c) Ensure that individual managers are held accountable for implementing the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995–2000) within their areas of responsibility, and that heads of departments and offices develop gender action plans which establish concrete strategies for the achievement of gender balance in individual departments and offices, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution and in conformity with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, so as to ensure, as far as possible, that the appointment and promotion of women will not be less than 50 per cent, until the goal of 50/50 gender distribution is met;

(d) Request the Administrative Committee on Coordination Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality to continue its work to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and to promote the integration of a gender perspective in the implementation and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits;

(e) Support the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, including through support for the important activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in the fulfilment of their respective mandates;

(f) Support national Governments in their efforts to strengthen national mechanisms through official development assistance (ODA) and other appropriate assistance;

(g) Encourage multilateral, bilateral, donor and development agencies to include in their programmes of assistance, activities that strengthen national machineries;

(h) Encourage Governments and national machineries to undertake wide consultations with their civil societies when providing information on gender and women's issues to relevant international bodies;

(i) Document and publish "good practices", and provide logistical support and ensure equal access to information technology wherever appropriate. In this regard, the offices of United Nations resident coordinators, in particular the women in development programmes and gender units, should play a critical role;

(j) Develop and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and qualitative performance indicators to ensure effective gender-sensitive planning, monitoring, evaluation and implementation of programmes;

(k) Encourage multilateral development institutions, bilateral donors, and international non-governmental organizations to make available methodology already developed on the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data measurement and valuation of unwaged work and to provide technical assistance and other resources, including financial resources as appropriate, to developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

(l) In order to elaborate a systematic and comprehensive approach to information on unremunerated work, the Division of the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat should prepare and circulate among all States a detailed and well-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire should seek inputs on developments in measuring and valuing unremunerated work and on policies and programmes as well as laws that recognize and address such work;

(m) Request the Division for the Advancement of Women to expand the Directory of National Machineries, by including, for example, mandates, number of staff, e-mail addresses, fax numbers and working-level contacts, so that this comprehensive information can facilitate better communication among national machineries around the world.

C. Draft decisions for adoption by the Council

3. The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decisions:

Draft decision I

Enabling the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to carry out its mandate*

The Economic and Social Council, recalling its resolution 1987/21 of 26 May 1987, in which it decided that, commencing with the thirty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission should meet annually until the year 2000, decides that the Commission should continue to meet annually thereafter, for a period of 10 working days.

Draft decision II

Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its forty-third session and provisional agenda and documentation for the forty-fourth session of the Commission**

The Economic and Social Council takes note of the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its forty-third session, and approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the forty-fourth session of the Commission set out below.

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* For the discussion, see chap. VIII, paras. 9–11.

** For the discussion, see chap. VI.

Provisional agenda and documentation for the forty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women:
   (a) Review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system;

   Documentation

   Report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and in mainstreaming a gender perspective within the United Nations system

   Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996–2001

   (b) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men;

   Documentation

   Report containing additional material on further actions and initiatives for the preparation of the outlook beyond the year 2000 (General Assembly resolution 52/231, para. 11)

   (c) Implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern.
4. Comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action.

   Documentation

   Report on the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, on the basis of national reports, taking into account the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/6, sect. III, para. 5 (f))

   Comparative report on how different categories of projects and programmes of United Nations organizations are including women's interests and gender mainstreaming issues and on resources allocated in this regard (General Assembly resolution 52/231, para. 14)
5. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions.
6. Communications concerning the status of women.

   Documentation

   Lists of confidential and non-confidential communications concerning the status of women
7. Provisional agenda for the forty-fifth session of the Commission.
8. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its forty-fourth session.

Draft decision III

Extraordinary meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women*

The Economic and Social Council decides:

(a) That the Commission on the Status of Women shall resume its forty-third session, subject to the availability of services, for one day, on an exceptional basis, in order to complete its work;

(b) In this respect, the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 1798 (XVII) of 11 December 1962, 2128 (XX) of 20 December 1965 and 2245 (XXI) of 20 December 1966 regarding travel entitlements will be waived.

D. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

4. The following resolutions and decision adopted by the Commission are brought to the attention of the Council:

Resolution 43/1. Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts**

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling its resolutions 39/2 of 31 March 1995, 40/1 of 22 March 1996, 41/1 of 21 March 1997 and 42/2 of 13 March 1998,

Recalling also the relevant provisions contained in the instruments of international humanitarian law relative to the protection of women and children in areas of armed conflict,

Welcoming the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women,[28] including the provisions regarding violence against women and children,

Expressing grave concern at the continuation of armed conflicts in many regions throughout the world and the human suffering and humanitarian emergencies they have caused,

Emphasizing that all forms of violence committed against the civilian population, including women and children in areas of armed conflict, including capturing them as hostages, seriously contravene international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for the protection of victims of war,[29]

Expressing its strong belief that the rapid and unconditional release of women and children taken hostage in areas of armed conflict will promote the implementation of the noble goals enshrined in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action,

1. *Condemns* violent acts in contravention of international humanitarian law against civilian women and children in areas of armed conflict, and calls for an effective response to such acts, including the immediate release of such women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts;

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* For the discussion, see chap. VIII, para. 12.

** For the discussion, see chap. II.

[28] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

[29] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970–973.

2. *Strongly urges* all parties to armed conflicts to respect fully the norms of international humanitarian law in armed conflict and to take all necessary measures for the protection of these women and children and for their immediate release;

3. *Urges* all parties to conflicts to provide unimpeded access to specialized humanitarian assistance for these women and children;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General and all relevant international organizations to use their capabilities and efforts to facilitate the release of these women and children;

5. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to prepare, taking into account the information provided by States and relevant international organizations, a report on the implementation of the present resolution, for submission to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session.

Resolution 43/2. Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recognizing that women play a vital role in the social and economic development of their countries and therefore profoundly concerned by the fact that out of 33.4 million people living with human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) today, women now represent 43 per cent of all people over the age of 15 living with HIV and AIDS,

Noting with great concern that the proportion of women becoming infected with HIV is growing in every region, that in sub-Saharan Africa there are already 6 women with HIV for every 5 men, and that in the younger age brackets (15–24 years), the HIV risk for African girls is even more disproportionate,

Recognizing that gender inequalities begin early in life and can render women and the girl child unable to protect their sexual and reproductive health, thus increasing their risk and vulnerability to HIV infection,

Mindful that the majority of women and the girl child in most developing countries do not have access to education, health care, social security and other basic services to enable them to enjoy full social and economic rights, and therefore suffer disproportionately from the consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, particularly in the economic and social spheres,

Recognizing that women who constitute the majority of the poor are especially vulnerable to HIV infection because of their subordinate status in society, in the households and communities and because of their restricted access to education, gainful employment and health and information services,

Also recognizing that women and, in particular, young girls, are physiologically and biologically more vulnerable than men to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and yet receive minimal health care and support when infected,

Noting with concern that approximately 80 per cent of the infected women have been infected through unprotected sex with an infected male partner, and acknowledging therefore that men have a shared responsibility towards protecting their own and women's sexual health,

* For the discussion, see chap. II.

Acknowledging that millions of women do not have access to means that have proved effective in preventing and lowering infection rates, such as male and female condoms, anti-retroviral drugs, relevant preventive education, acceptable counselling and testing services,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and its co-sponsoring organizations, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization and the World Bank, to empower women through capacity development programmes, as well as programmes that provide women with access to development resources and strengthen their networks which offer care and support to women affected by HIV/AIDS,

1. *Reaffirms* the rights of women and the girl child infected and affected by HIV/AIDS to have equal access to health, education and social services and to be protected from all forms of discrimination, stigma, abuse and neglect;

2. *Also reaffirms* the human rights of girls and women to have equal access to education, skills training and employment opportunities as a means to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection;

3. *Urges* Governments to take all necessary measures to strengthen women's economic independence, to protect and promote their human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to allow them to better protect themselves from HIV infection;

4. *Emphasizes* that the advancement and empowerment of women is critical to increasing the ability of women and young girls to protect themselves from HIV infection;

5. *Stresses* that every effort should be made by Governments, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, individually and collectively, to place combating HIV/AIDS as a priority on the development agenda and to implement effective prevention strategies and programmes, especially for the most vulnerable populations, including women and young girls;

6. *Calls upon* the international community, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify their support of national efforts against HIV/AIDS, particularly in favour of women and young girls, in the worst-hit regions of Africa and where the epidemic is severely setting back national development gains;

7. *Urges* Governments to take steps to create an environment that promotes compassion and support for those infected with HIV, to provide the legal framework that will protect the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, to enable those who are vulnerable to have access to appropriate voluntary counselling services and to encourage efforts to reduce discrimination and stigmatization;

8. *Also urges* Governments, with the assistance of relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to create an environment and conditions that will take care of and support children orphaned by AIDS;

9. *Further urges* Governments, with the assistance of relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, to adopt a long-term, timely, coherent and integrated AIDS prevention policy, with public information and education programmes specifically tailored to the needs of women and girls within their sociocultural contexts and sensitivities and specific needs in their life cycle;

10. *Encourages* Governments and the civil society to support women's groups and community organizations in changing harmful traditions and practices affecting the health of women and girls and to take steps to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including rape and sexual coercion, which aggravate the conditions fostering the spread of the epidemic;

11. *Encourages* accelerated research on vaccine development and intensified additional research on promotion of the female condom, microbicides and other options that offer women more control for the protection of their reproductive and sexual health;

12. *Requests* Governments to ensure that condoms and care for sexually transmitted diseases are available in places accessible and affordable to women while ensuring their privacy;

13. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in promoting sexual and reproductive health education for young people, in particular girls, while encouraging them to delay sexual initiation, and, in this context, urges that greater attention must be given to the education of men and boys about their roles and their responsibilities in preventing the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, to their partners;

14. *Urges* the Programme and its co-sponsors to intensify their efforts in assisting Governments to determine the best policies and programmes to prevent women and young girls from becoming infected with HIV/AIDS;

15. *Requests* the Programme and its co-sponsors, bilateral and multilateral donors, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in their efforts to prevent HIV infection, to give urgent and priority attention to the situation of women and girls in Africa;

16. *Invites* the relevant entities of the United Nations system, including agencies, funds and programmes, to mainstream gender policies and programmes integrating HIV/AIDS activities;

17. *Invites* the Secretary-General to report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

Resolution 43/3. Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Reaffirming the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women[28] that women have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,

Recalling that the Platform for Action, in the critical area on women and health,[30] included women's mental health on the agenda for women's empowerment, by asserting that health was a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, women had the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, health and well-being eluded the majority of women, and one of the major barriers for women to the achievement of the highest attainable standard of health was gender-based inequality,

Upholding the importance of attaining full mental health for all people, as recognized in General Assembly resolution 46/119 of 17 December 1991, entitled "The protection of persons with mental illness and the improvement of mental health care",

[30] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 89.

Welcoming the strong commitments to women and mental health made by the Director General of the World Health Organization at the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women,

Concerned that, in many parts of the world, depression affects more women than men, owing, among other factors, to the inferior social and economic status of women and girls,

Concerned also that women throughout their life cycle experience tremendous health burdens created by gender discrimination, all forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence, lack of appropriate physical and mental health care, nutrition and education or access to them, high rates of illiteracy, and the stress of multiple and conflicting roles,

Acknowledging that special attention must be given to the mental health needs of women, including those who are marginalized because of, *inter alia*, race, ethnicity, religion, age, social and economic status, physical and/or mental disability, exploitative commercial sex, displacement, migration and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS),

1. *Calls* for the urgent implementation of the health objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and other relevant international agreements with the integration of mental health as a priority issue;

2. *Requests* Governments to include in their national policies and/or plans of action for women specific measures that would address the mental health needs of women and girls, especially the need for psychosocial care and counselling services;

3. *Calls upon* Governments to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in mental health care, where it exists, and to provide access to appropriate treatment that is responsive to women's mental health needs at all ages;

4. *Invites* Governments to develop and implement public awareness campaigns on mental health and education focusing on women and girls who are most in need of psychological support;

5. *Also invites* Governments and other relevant actors, as appropriate, to provide or enhance mental health education and both pre-service and in-service training to primary health care workers, social service professionals, teachers and other educators, and community workers;

6. *Encourages* non-governmental organizations, private funding institutions and individual donors to organize and support assistance programmes and missions tailored to the needs of areas where psychological/psychiatric problems are prevalent among the population, in particular among poor urban and rural women, with a view to providing not only primary treatment but also training for family members and/or other persons who may take over the care of the afflicted persons;

7. *Requests* the relevant United Nations bodies, in collaboration with relevant agencies, to address and support the mental health needs of women and girls through various measures and projects;

8. *Invites* the World Health Organization, in partnership with other relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, and through extrabudgetary resources, to develop and disseminate a training manual designed to provide primary health care workers, social service professionals, and other community workers with the appropriate skills for assisting women and girls who are experiencing problems and mental disorders as a result of trauma, all forms of discrimination, exploitation, abuse and oppression;

9. *Urges* the Secretary-General, in collaboration with relevant United Nations bodies, to organize, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, regional expert group meetings with a view to developing gender- and age-disaggregated and gender-sensitive psychosocial and mental health situation analyses and indicators as bases for determining progress in women's and girls' emotional well-being and mental health;

10. *Invites* concerned non-governmental organizations, funding sources and the private sector, in coordination with national authorities concerned, to support and develop a programme that will bring a wide range of expertise and proven interventions, including alternative community-based services, to the training of local community workers, teachers and primary health care staff and to provide appropriate interventions for stress-related disorders to girls and women in crisis;

11. *Decides* to include in the framework of the review process for the special session of the General Assembly to appraise and assess progress achieved in implementation of the Beijing Programme for Action the emerging issue of the mental health of girls and women, so that further initiatives and action can be undertaken;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to bring this resolution to the attention of the relevant bodies of the United Nations;

13. *Invites* States Members and United Nations agencies concerned to make available, for the above purpose, existing measures relevant to the present resolution, and/or taken to implement it, for consideration by the Commission at its forty-fourth session.

Decision 43/101. Documents considered by the Commission on the Status of Women under agenda item 3

At its 17th meeting, on 1 April 1999, the Commission on the Status of Women took note of the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;[31]

(b) Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Gender and ageing: problems, perceptions and policies";[32]

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the thematic issues before the Commission on the status of women;[33]

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat.[34]

[31] E/CN.6/1999/2 and Add.1.

[32] E/CN.6/1999/3.

[33] E/CN.6/1999/4.

[34] E/CN.6/1999/5.

Chapter II

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women

1. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 1st to 8th, 10th, 13th, 14th and 17th meetings, from 1 to 4 and on 8, 11 and 12 March and 1 April 1999. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (E/CN.6/1999/2 and Add.1);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Gender and ageing: problems, perceptions and policies (E/CN.6/1999/3);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the thematic issues before the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/1999/4);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (E/CN.6/1999/5);

(e) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting a report by the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/166 (E/CN.6/1999/6);

(f) Letter dated 16 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations transmitting two documents concerning the work of the Council of Europe in the fields of equality between women and men and gender mainstreaming (E/CN.6/1999/7);

(g) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the results of the twentieth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (E/CN.6/1999/CRP.1);

(h) Note by the Secretary-General on the proposed programme of work in the field of advancement of women for the biennium 2000–2001 (E/CN.6/1999/CRP.2);

(i) Note by the Secretary-General containing a preliminary executive summary of the 1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (E/CN.6/1999/CRP.3);

(j) Statement submitted by the International Federation of University Women, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (E/CN.6/1999/NGO/1);

(k) Statement submitted by the International Federation on ageing, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Council (E/CN.6/1999/NGO/2);

(l) Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Council (E/CN.6/1999/NGO/3);

(m) Statement submitted by Bahá'í International Community, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Council (E/CN.6/1999/NGO/4);

(n) Statement submitted by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Council (E/CN.6/1999/NGO/5);

(o) Statement submitted by Zonta International, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Council (E/CN.6/1999/NGO/6);

(p) Statement submitted by the Global Alliance for Women's Health, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Council (E/CN.6/1999/NGO/7).

2. At its 1st meeting, on 1 March, the Commission heard an introductory statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

3. At the same meeting, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women made a statement.

4. Also at the same meeting, the Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women made a statement.

Review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system (agenda item 3 (a))

5. At its 10th meeting, on 8 March, the Commission held a discussion on agenda item 3 (a) and heard statements by the Deputy Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women.

6. At the same meeting, the observer for Algeria made a statement, which was responded to by the Deputy Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women.

Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men (agenda item 3 (b))

7. At its 1st to 4th and 6th meetings, on 1 to 3 March, the Commission held a discussion on agenda item 3 (b), together with agenda item 4.

8. At the 1st meeting, on 1 March, statements were made by the representatives of Germany (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union and the associated countries of Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as Iceland and Liechtenstein), Japan, Norway, Côte d'Ivoire and Italy, and by the observers for Guyana (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Sweden and Namibia.

9. At the same meeting, the observer for the Holy See made a statement.

10. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

11. At the same meeting, the observer for the International Organization for Migration made a statement.

12. Also at the same meeting, the observer for the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, also made a statement.

13. At its 2nd meeting, on 1 March, statements were made by the representatives of Senegal, Saint Lucia (on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community), the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Chile, Cuba, Mali and Turkey, and by the observers for Kazakhstan, Canada, Indonesia and Israel.

14. At the same meeting, the observer for Switzerland made a statement.

15. Also at the same meeting, the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women made a statement.

16. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the representatives of the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Joint and Co-Sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

17. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

18. At the same meeting, the observer for the Council of Europe made a statement.

19. At the 3rd meeting, on 2 March, statements were made by the representatives of the Republic of Korea, Brazil, Lithuania, Mexico, China, Ghana, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Slovakia, and by the observers for Kenya, Australia, Zimbabwe, New Zealand, Algeria, Ecuador, the United Republic of Tanzania and Argentina.

20. At the same meeting, the observer for Palestine also made a statement.

21. Also at the same meeting, the Commission held a dialogue with non-governmental organizations, in which the following observers made statements on behalf of a number of other non-governmental organizations: Bahá'í International Community, International Federation of University Women, a caucus of European non-governmental organizations, Alliance for Arab Women, World Blind Union, All India Women's Conference, World Islamic Call Society, Women's Information Services, International Women Count Network, International Council of Women, Empowering Widows in Development and International Federation of Business and Professional Women.

22. At the 4th meeting, on 2 March, statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, the Islamic Republic of Iran and India, and by the observers for Colombia and the Philippines.

23. At the 6th meeting, on 3 March, statements were made by the representatives of the Russian Federation, Egypt, Bolivia and Mongolia, and by the observers for Costa Rica, Iraq, Botswana, Cyprus, Viet Nam, Croatia and Yemen.

24. At the same meeting, the representative of the World Bank made a statement.

Panel discussions on implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern (agenda item 3 (c))

25. At its 5th and 6th meetings, on 3 March, the Commission held a panel discussion and dialogue on women and health (agenda item 3 (c) (i)).

26. At the same meetings, presentations were made by the following experts: Sandra Dean-Patterson, Coordinator of Health Social Services, Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre, Ministry of Housing and Social Development (Bahamas); Mahmoud F. Fathalla, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Assiut University (Egypt); Stephen Matlin, Director, Human Resource Development Division, Commonwealth secretariat (United Kingdom); and Peter Piot, Executive Director, Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

27. At its 7th and 8th meetings, on 4 March, the Commission held a panel discussion and dialogue on institutional mechanisms (agenda item 3 (c) (ii)).

28. At the same meetings, presentations were made by the following experts: Rounaq Jahan, Senior Research School, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia

University (United States); Jaraslova Moserová, Vice-Chair, European Integration Committee, Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic; Glenda P. Simms, Executive Director, Bureau of Women's Affairs (Jamaica); and Shirin M. Rai, Senior Lecturer in Politics and Women's Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry (United Kingdom).

29. The principal elements emerging from the panel discussions were summarized by the moderators of the two panels — the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Commission. The text was approved by the Commission for inclusion as an annex to its report (see annex I), and it was neither negotiated nor adopted by the Commission.

Action taken by the Commission

Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts

30. At the 13th meeting, on 11 March, the observer for Azerbaijan,[35] on behalf of Argentina,[35] Azerbaijan,[35] Bangladesh,[35] Bosnia and Herzegovina,[35] Colombia,[35] Ecuador,[35] Georgia,[35] Guatemala,[35] Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan,[35] Kazakhstan,[35] Kyrgyzstan,[35] Malaysia, Namibia,[35] Nigeria,[35] Pakistan,[35] Peru, South Africa,[35] Tajikistan,[35] Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan,[35] Uzbekistan[35] and Zimbabwe,[35] introduced a draft resolution entitled "Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts" (E/CN.6/1999/L.5). Subsequently, Costa Rica,[35] Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Italy, Senegal, the Sudan and Uruguay[35] joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

31. At the 14th meeting, on 12 March, the Commission adopted the draft resolution (see chap. I, sect. D, resolution 43/1).

Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

32. At the 13th meeting, on 11 March, the observer for Zambia,[35] on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the African group of States, Norway and Thailand, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome" (E/CN.6/1999/L.6), and orally revised it as follows:

(a) In the fourth preambular paragraph, the words "have access to education, health care, social security and other basic services to enable them to" were inserted before the words "enjoy full social and economic rights", and the words "such as education, health care, welfare" were deleted before the words "and therefore suffer disproportionately";

(b) In operative paragraph 1, the word "equal" was inserted before the words "access to health".

33. Subsequently, the United States of America joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, as orally revised.

34. At the 14th meeting, on 12 March, the Commission adopted the draft resolution, as orally revised (see chap. I, sect. D, resolution 43/2).

[35] In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan

35. At the 13th meeting, on 11 March, the representative of the United States of America, on behalf of Argentina,[35] Australia,[35] Austria,[35] Belgium, Bulgaria,[35] Canada,[35] Chile, Denmark,[35] the Dominican Republic, Ecuador,[35] Finland,[35] France, Germany, Ghana, Greece,[35] Ireland,[35] Israel,[35] Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan,[35] Lithuania, Luxembourg,[35] the Netherlands,[35] New Zealand,[35] Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal,[35] the Republic of Moldova,[35] Romania,[35] Slovakia, South Africa,[35] Spain,[35] Sweden,[35] Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan" (E/CN.6/1999/L.7). Subsequently, Costa Rica,[35] Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia,[35] Cyprus, Czech Republic,[35] Hungary,[35] Iceland,[35] Kenya, Malaysia, the Philippines,[35] Poland and Slovenia[35] joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

36. At the 17th meeting, on 1 April, the representative of the United States of America orally revised operative paragraph 8 of the draft resolution as a result of informal consultations by inserting the words "within Afghanistan" after the words "into all United Nations programmes".

37. At the same meeting, Colombia, Georgia, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, Nepal, the Russian Federation and Venezuela joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, as orally revised.

38. Following a statement by the representative of Germany (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union and associated countries, as well as Cyprus, Iceland and Liechtenstein), the Commission approved the draft resolution, as orally revised, and recommended it to the Economic and Social Council for adoption (see chap. I, sect. B, draft resolution I).

Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups

39. At the 13th meeting, on 11 March, the observer for the Philippines,[35] on behalf of Chile, Ecuador,[35] Georgia,[35] Ghana, Guatemala,[35] Indonesia,[35] Kenya,[35] Namibia,[35] Panama,[35] Peru, the Philippines,[35] Senegal, Thailand, Venezuela[35] and Zambia,[35] introduced a draft resolution entitled "Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups" (E/CN.6/1999/L.8), and orally revised it. Subsequently, Botswana,[35] Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, Rwanda and Ukraine[35] joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, which read as follows:

> "*The Commission on the Status of Women*,
>
> "*Reaffirming* the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women[36] that women have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,
>
> "*Recalling* that the Platform for Action, in the critical area on women and health,[37] included women's mental health on the agenda for women's empowerment, by asserting that health was a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being; women had the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; health and well-being eluded the majority of women; and one of the major barriers for women to the achievement of the highest attainable standard of health was gender-based inequality,

[36] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

[37] Ibid., chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 89.

"*Upholding* the importance of attaining full mental health for all people, as recognized in General Assembly resolution 46/119 of 17 December 1991, entitled 'The protection of persons with mental illness and the improvement of mental health care',

"*Welcoming* the strong commitments to women and mental health made by the Director General of the World Health Organization at the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women,

"*Concerned* that depression affects women twice as often as men, owing, among other factors, to the imposed inferior social and economic status of women and girls throughout the world,

"*Concerned also* that women throughout their life cycle experience tremendous health burdens created by gender discrimination; all forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence; lack of appropriate physical and mental health care, nutrition and education or access to them; high rates of illiteracy; and the stress of multiple and conflicting roles,

"*Acknowledging* that special attention must be given to the mental health needs of women, including those who are marginalized because of, *inter alia*, race, ethnicity, religion, age, social and economic status, physical and/or mental disability, exploitative commercial sex, displacement, migration and HIV/AIDS,

"1. *Calls* for the urgent implementation of the health objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and other relevant international agreements with the integration of mental health as a priority issue;

"2. *Requests* Governments to include in their national policies and plans of action for women specific measures that would address the mental health needs of women and girls, especially the need for psychosocial care and counselling services;

"3. *Calls upon* Governments to take all possible steps to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in mental health care and to provide access to appropriate treatment that is responsive to women's mental health needs at all ages;

"4. *Urges* Governments to develop and implement public awareness campaigns on mental health and education and public health policies that are gender-sensitive and focus on women and girls who are most in need of psychological support;

"5. *Requests* Governments to provide or enhance mental health education and both pre-service and in-service training to primary health care workers, social service professionals, teachers and other educators, and community workers;

"6. *Calls upon* Governments to develop and implement legislation and comprehensive social and economic policies that address the mental health needs of women and girls;

"7. *Encourages* non-governmental organizations, private funding institutions and individual donors to organize and support, with the consent of the Governments concerned, mercy missions (along the lines of Médecins sans frontières) to areas where psychological/psychiatric problems are prevalent among the population, in particular among poor urban and rural women, with a view to providing not only primary treatment but also training for family members and/or other persons who may take over the care of the afflicted persons;

"8. *Requests* pharmaceutical companies to donate medicines for the treatment of mental disorders, or to make them more affordable to areas where psychological/psychiatric problems are prevalent;

"9. *Requests* the relevant United Nations bodies, in collaboration with relevant agencies, to adopt measures and develop projects that address and support the mental health needs of women and girls;

"10. *Calls upon* the United Nations to develop and disseminate a training manual designed to provide primary health care workers, social service professionals, and other community workers with the appropriate skills for assisting women and girls who are experiencing problems and mental disorders as a result of trauma, all forms of discrimination, exploitation, abuse and oppression;

"11. *Urges* the Secretary-General to find ways within the United Nations and in coordination with other relevant agencies to organize regional expert group meetings with a view to developing gender- and age-disaggregated and gender-sensitive psychosocial and mental health situation analyses and indicators as bases for determining progress in women's and girls' emotional well-being and mental health, for submission to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session;

"12. *Invites* concerned non-governmental organizations, funding sources and the private sector to support and develop a programme that will bring a wide range of expertise and proven interventions to the training of local community workers, teachers and primary health care staff and provide appropriate interventions for stress-related disorders to girls and women in crisis;

"13. *Decides* to include in the framework of the review process for the special session of the General Assembly to appraise and assess progress achieved in implementation of the Beijing Programme for Action the emerging issue of mental health of girls and women, so that further initiatives and action can be undertaken;

"14. *Invites* States Members and United Nations agencies concerned to report on existing measures relevant to the present resolution, and/or taken to implement it, for consideration by the Commission at its forty-fourth session."

40. At the 14th meeting, on 12 March, statements were made by the Secretary of the Commission and the observer for the Philippines.

41. At the 17th meeting, on 1 April, the Commission had before it a revised draft resolution entitled "Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups" (E/CN.6/1999/L.8/Rev.1), submitted by the sponsors of draft resolution E/CN.6/1999/L.8 as well as Colombia,[37] and Papua New Guinea.[38]

42. At the same meeting, the observer for the Philippines informed the Commission that Senegal should be deleted from the list of sponsors of the revised draft resolution.

43. Also at the same meeting, Ethiopia joined in sponsoring the revised draft resolution.

44. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representative of the Sudan and the observer for Algeria.

45. The Commission then adopted the revised draft resolution (see chap. I, sect. D, resolution 43/3).

[38] In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Palestinian women

46. At the 13th meeting, on 11 March, the observer for Guyana, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Palestinian women" (E/CN.6/1999/L.9).

47. At the 14th meeting, on 12 March, the Commission approved the draft resolution by a recorded vote of 34 to 1, with 4 abstentions, and recommended it to the Economic and Social Council for adoption (see chap. I, sect. B, draft resolution II). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Belgium, Chile, China, Cuba, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia,[39] Senegal, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Bolivia,[40] Côte d'Ivoire,[40] Norway, Uganda.

48. Before the draft resolution was adopted, the observer for Israel made a statement; after it was adopted, statements in explanation of vote were made by the representatives of the United States of America, Lebanon, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Norway and the Russian Federation. The observers for the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen also made statements.

System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002–2005

49. At the 14th meeting, on 12 March, the Commission had before it a draft resolution entitled "System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002–2005" (E/CN.6/1999/L.10), which was submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission.

50. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the draft resolution and recommended it to the Economic and Social Council for adoption (see chap. I, sect. B, draft resolution III).

Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action

51. At the 17th meeting, on 1 April, the Commission had before it draft and revised draft agreed conclusions submitted by its Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, Nonhlanhla Mlangeni (Swaziland), as the moderators of the panel discussions on the critical areas of concern (E/CN.6/1999/L.2 and Rev.1, and E/CN.6/1999/L.3 and Rev.1).

52. At the same meeting, the Chairperson made a correction to the footnotes in the documents.

53. Also at the same meeting, the Vice-Chairperson, Nonhlanhla Mlangeni (Swaziland), informed the Commission that as a result of informal consultations held on the revised draft agreed conclusions on institutional mechanisms (E/CN.6/1999/L.3/Rev.1), it had been agreed to delete paragraph 7, section I (h), which had read:

[39] Saint Lucia was not present during the vote.

[40] The delegations of Bolivia and Côte d'Ivoire subsequently indicated that their votes should have been in favour of the draft resolution and not in abstention.

"Ensure that senior management in each ministry or agency takes the responsibility for guaranteeing that the goal of gender equality is pursued, that a gender perspective is integrated in all activities and that senior managers get appropriate assistance from gender experts or gender focal points".

54. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft agreed conclusions, as orally revised and corrected, and recommended their endorsement by the Economic and Social Council (see chap. I, sect. B, draft resolution IV).

Documents relating to agenda item 3

55. At its 17th meeting, on 1 April, the Commission took note of the following documents under agenda item 3 (see chap. I, sect. D, decision 43/101):

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (E/CN.6/1999/2 and Add.1);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Gender and ageing: problems, perceptions and policies" (E/CN.6/1999/3);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the thematic issues before the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/1999/4);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (E/CN.6/1999/5).

Chapter III

Initiation of the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action and preparation for the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000

1. The Commission held a general discussion of agenda item 4, together with agenda item 3 (b), at its 1st to 4th meetings, from 1 to 3 March 1999. It had before it a letter dated 25 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations transmitting the report of the European Conference on Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action (E/CN.6/1999/9) (for the discussion, see chap. II).

2. Action taken by the Commission under agenda item 4 is detailed in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" on its second session (E/1999/60).

Chapter IV

Communications concerning the status of women

1. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 12th meeting (a closed meeting), on 10 March 1999.

2. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/27, the Commission established a working group to consider communications concerning the status of women. The following five members, nominated by their regional groups, were appointed: Esmaeil Afshari (Islamic Republic of Iran); Aleksandra Duda (Poland); Diénébou Kaba Camara (Côte d'Ivoire); Didier Le Bret (France); and Eduardo Tapia (Chile). The Working Group held seven meetings.

Action taken by the Commission

Report of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women

3. At the 12th meeting (a closed meeting), on 10 March, the Commission considered the report of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/1999/CRP.5).

4. At the same meeting, the Commission took note of the report of the Working Group and agreed to include it in the report of the Commission. The report of the Working Group is as follows:

> "1. The Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women was guided in its deliberations by the mandate given by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 76 (V) of 5 August 1947, as amended by the Council in its resolutions 304 I (XI) of 14 and 17 July 1950 and 1983/27 of 26 May 1983.
>
> "2. The Working Group considered the list of confidential communications (see E/CN.6/1999/SW/COMM.LIST/33 and Add.1) and of non-confidential communications (see E/CN.6/1999/CR.35) concerning the status of women.
>
> "3. The Working Group took note of the 13 confidential communications and two non-confidential communications received directly by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat and of the 83 confidential communications received by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It also took note of the fact that no confidential communications had been received by other United Nations bodies or specialized agencies.
>
> "4. The Working Group expressed its deep concern in relation to the continuing grave violations of women's human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and the persistent and pervasive discrimination against women.
>
> "5. The Working Group was concerned at the continuing abusive treatment of women, including custodial deaths, torture, rape, abduction, disappearances, arbitrary arrests, forced abortions and sterilizations, harassment and arson by security forces, including military and police forces, or by other governmental authorities, particularly where separatist movements were reported.
>
> "6. The Working Group was concerned by the targeting of civilians, including women and children, for bombing, and by internally displaced persons being subject to confiscation of property, torture and floggings, harassment and forcible evictions

in conflict situations. The Working Group also noted with concern discrimination against women in access to international humanitarian aid.

"7. The Working Group noted with concern the failure of Governments in times of political instability to protect civilians, including women and children, who were victims of massacre and violations of human rights, including death threats, torture, rape, disappearances, hostage-taking and arbitrary detention. The Working Group also noted with concern the failure of Governments to punish those responsible for the violations.

"8. The Working Group noted with concern the failure of Governments to protect the rights of ethnic and religious minority women, particularly during times of civil unrest, riot and in post-conflict situations. It also noted with concern the discrimination against minorities, in particular the denial of their rights to political participation, the denial of language rights and the denial of rights to equal access to governmental employment, education and health care.

"9. The Working Group was concerned at the allegations of the violations of the human rights of women, including widespread arbitrary arrest, use of excessive force during arrests, incommunicado detention, prolonged administrative detention, detention of minors, torture and ill-treatment, unfair trial and forcible exile of political opponents and prisoners. In addition, the Working Group noted with concern abusive treatment of the wives, children and relatives of political opponents and prisoners.

"10. The Working Group was deeply concerned about ongoing and large-scale trafficking in women and girls, and noted with concern the lack of effective national and international measures against forcible trafficking in women and girls.

"11. The Working Group noted with concern the continued discrimination against indigenous families, including women and children. The Working Group also expressed its concern about the harassment of indigenous organizations and the death threats they received.

"12. The Working Group also expressed its concern about alleged cases of violation of the right to freedom of expression, particularly concerning women journalists who had suffered the threat of arbitrary arrest and detention as a consequence of their work. The Working Group expressed concern about cases of arrest, harassment, detention and the disappearance of journalists.

"13. The Working Group further noted with concern the ongoing harassment, including acts of violence, intimidation and death threats, of human rights defenders by members of the police and other authority figures. The Working Group was also concerned by the lack of investigation from authorities in cases where the safety and freedom of human rights defenders, members of non-governmental organizations and women activists had been threatened.

"14. The Working Group noted with concern violations of the civil and economic rights of migrant women workers, including foreign contract workers, who were subjected to ill-treatment, limited personal freedom and inadequate or no payment for their work, without the possibility of recourse to the legal system of the receiving country for justice.

"15. The Working Group is deeply concerned about the continuing de facto discriminatory treatment of certain social groups, including women, reflected by limitations on their full participation in public life, educational choices and employment opportunities and by alleged child slavery and prostitution.

"16. The Working Group noted with concern remaining discriminatory provisions against women in national legal systems.

"17. The Working Group took note of cases referring to difficulties for women in exercising their right to nationality, citizenship and the right to family unity.

"18. The Working Group was gravely concerned by more than 35,000 communications regarding gross violations of all of the basic human rights of women in one case. They included violations of civil and political rights and of economic, social and cultural rights — specifically, freedom of movement and religion and of the equal right to work, education and health. The Working Group was also concerned by communications regarding forced child prostitution, suicide and severe depression among women.

"19. The Working Group was further gravely concerned in regard to that case by communications regarding particularly inhuman punishment, including women being beaten for disobedience, tortured, shot, burnt alive and sprayed with acid, which constitutes flagrant violation of the right to life.

"20. In considering the non-confidential communications, the Working Group took note of the continued absence of women in decision-making processes in the context of conflict prevention and resolution. In addition, the Working Group was concerned that women and children were the primary victims of war and poverty.

"21. The Working Group expressed appreciation to those Governments that had sent replies conducive to the clarification of the cases concerned. It noted, however, that some Governments had not replied. The Working Group urged the Commission to encourage all Governments concerned to send their replies in due time and to cooperate in order to improve the communication mechanism.

"22. With reference to the criteria used in selecting the communications to be submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Working Group reiterated that the content of communications must refer to women and issues affecting women — that is, to injustices or discriminatory acts or practices against women."

Chapter V

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention

1. The Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at its 15th meeting, on 12 March 1999.

Action taken by the Commission

Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

2. At the 15th meeting, on 12 March, the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Aloisia Wörgetter (Austria), introduced and orally revised the draft report of the Working Group (E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.1 and Add.1).

3. The Commission also had before it an informal paper containing a compilation of interpretative statements made by delegations during the negotiations, and agreed to include the statements in the report of the Working Group.

4. The Commission then adopted the draft report of the Working Group and agreed to annex it to the present report (see annex II).

Draft optional protocol to the Convention and draft resolution

5. At the 15th meeting, on 12 March, the Commission had before it the revised draft optional protocol to the Convention (E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.2), submitted by the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on the basis of informal consultations held on the compilation text in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its forty-second session.

6. At the same meeting, the Commission had before it a draft resolution entitled "Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.3), submitted by the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on the basis of informal consultations.

7. Also, at the same meeting, the Secretary of the commission read out the following statement on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution:

> "1. Should the Commission on the Status of Women adopt draft resolution E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.3 as recommended by the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, such decision would, in principle, entail programme budget implications related to the additional meetings required for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
>
> "2. At present, based on current standard costs, one additional week of meetings of the Committee (i.e., five working days and two meetings a day) would entail additional requirements of $67,620 for subsistence allowance to the members of the Committee and $107,400 for conference services, at full cost. At this stage, however,

it is too early to provide precise estimates for the requirements of the Committee. These requirements would be provided at the time of the entry into force of the optional protocol. In the meantime, no additional requirements would be necessary."

8. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the draft resolution and revised draft optional protocol for adoption by the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (see chap. I, sect. A).

9. Also at the same meeting, the Chairperson of the Commission made a statement.

10. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.

11. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of India, Japan, Germany (on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, as well as Cyprus, Iceland and Liechtenstein), Norway, the Republic of Korea, Ghana, the Russian Federation, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Turkey, Senegal, Mongolia, Rwanda and Mali, and by the observers for New Zealand, the Philippines, Luxembourg, Bangladesh, Slovenia, Iraq and Yemen.

12. At the same meeting, statements were made by the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, Marcela Maria Nicodemos (Brazil) and by the Chairperson of the Working Group.

Chapter VI

Provisional agenda for the forty-fourth session of the Commission

1. The Commission considered item 7 of its agenda at its 17th meeting, on 1 April 1999. It had before it a note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional agenda and documentation for the forty-fourth session of the Commission (E/CN.6/1999/L.12).

2. At the same meeting, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women made a statement.

3. The Commission then approved the provisional agenda and documentation for its forty-fourth session (see chap. I, sect. C, draft decision II).

Chapter VII

Adoption of the report of the Commission on its forty-third session

1. At the 17th meeting, on 1 April 1999, the Chairperson of the Commission introduced the draft report of the Commission on its forty-third session (E/CN.6/1999/L.4) on behalf of Zuzana Vranová (Slovakia), Vice-Chairperson of the Commission with rapporteurial responsibilities.

2. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft report.

Chapter VIII

Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on the Status of Women held its forty-third session at United Nations Headquarters from 1 to 12 March 1999 and 1 April. The Commission held 17 meetings (1st to 17th). In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1997/227, the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women also met during the session.

2. The session was opened by the Chairperson, Patricia Flor (Germany), who also made a statement.

B. Attendance

3. The session was attended by representatives of 44 States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations, non-member States and entities maintaining permanent observer missions to the United Nations, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system, and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended. A list of participants is contained in annex III to the present report.

C. Election of officers

4. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/21, the officers elected to the Bureau of the Commission at its forty-second session were to serve as officers during the forty-third session. The Bureau therefore comprised:

Chairperson:
Patricia Flor (Germany)

Vice-Chairpersons:
Karam Fadi Habib (Lebanon)
Marcela Maria Nicodemos (Brazil)
Nonhlanhla P. L. Mlangeni (Swaziland)
Zuzana Vranová (Slovakia)

5. At its 1st meeting, on 1 March, the Commission designated Zuzana Vranová Vice-Chairperson with rapporteurial responsibilities.

D. Agenda and organization of work

6. At its 1st meeting, on 1 March, the Commission adopted its provisional agenda and approved its organization of work, as contained in document E/CN.6/1999/1. The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women:

   (a) Review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system;

   (b) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men;

   (c) Implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern.

4. Initiation of the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action and preparation for the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000.

5. Communications concerning the status of women.

6. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention.

7. Provisional agenda for the forty-fourth session of the Commission.

8. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its forty-third session.

7. Also at its 1st meeting, the Commission was informed that Aloisia Wörgetter (Austria) would continue to serve as Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, established in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/29.

E. Consultations with non-governmental organizations

8. Written statements, submitted by non-governmental organizations in accordance with rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, were circulated in documents E/CN.6/1999/NGO/1–7.

* * *

Action taken by the Commission

Enabling the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to carry out its mandate

9. At the 14th meeting, on 12 March, the Commission had before it a draft decision entitled "Enabling the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to carry out its mandate" (E/CN.6/1999/L.11), submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission.

10. At the same meeting, the representative of Cuba raised a question, which was responded to by the Chairperson.

11. The Commission then approved the draft decision and recommended it to the Economic and Social Council for adoption (see chap. I, sect. C, draft decision I).

Extraordinary meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women

12. At the 16th meeting, on 13 March, the Commission, on the proposal of the Chairperson, recommended a draft decision (subsequently issued in document E/CN.6/1999/L.13 and entitled "Extraordinary meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women") to the Economic and Social Council for adoption, which would allow the Commission to hold an additional meeting for one day in order to complete its work (see chap. I, sect. C, draft decision III).

Annex I

Summaries of the panel discussions on the critical areas of concern

A. Women and health: moderator's summary

1. On 3 March 1999, the Commission held a panel discussion at its 5th meeting, followed by a dialogue at its 6th meeting, on women and health, one of the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action adopted at Beijing. The panellists were Sandra Dean-Patterson (Bahamas), Coordinator of Health Social Services, Ministry of Housing and Social Development; Mahmoud F. Fathalla (Egypt), Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Assiut University; Stephen Matlin (United Kingdom), Director of Human Resource Development Division, Commonwealth secretariat; and Peter Piot, Executive Director of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

2. Participants at the panel discussion and dialogue noted that the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development held at Cairo made a link between women's human rights and women's health and reproductive rights. Inattention to and neglect of women's health issues in the legislative and regulatory frameworks of countries were recognized as part of systematic discrimination against women.

3. Concern was expressed that poverty remains a root cause of women's ill health. Several speakers noted that globalization and the current economic crisis in some regions have had adverse effects on national health systems and have also affected health services for women. Gender-neutral formulations referring to such objectives as "cost reduction" frequently include hidden gender implications negative to women. Shrinking public resources for health care are cushioned by the voluntary contributions of women, for whom the care for ailing family members is an additional burden. A few speakers also expressed concern about the impact of armed conflict, occupation, political embargo and natural disasters on women's health in their countries. Since many problems could not be solved by individual countries on their own, an appeal was made for assistance and international cooperation.

4. There was general agreement to look beyond the sexual and reproductive health of women and to focus on their different needs throughout the whole life cycle, a perspective set by the Beijing Platform for Action. Women's health is vulnerable before and after the reproductive years and needs to be considered in a holistic way. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, steps have been taken by many countries to address specific health problems of women, such as breast cancer and cancer of reproductive organs, osteoporosis and adolescent eating disorders, and to find remedies for these gender-specific medical problems through the introduction of nutritional education for older women, increased access to mammograms and the availability of health-related counselling for adolescent girls.

5. Among the areas of concern in women's health, the high rate of maternal mortality remains at the centre of attention. It was recalled that pregnancy is not a disease but a means of societal survival and continuation, and that society must protect pregnant women. The provision of essential obstetric services is a necessity to save the life of mothers at risk from complications during pregnancy and delivery and after childbirth. Health professionals and women's organizations should make greater efforts to implement the World Health Organization Safe Motherhood Initiative. It was deplored that far too many women die from

complications after illegal abortions. As agreed at Beijing and Cairo, efforts should be made to eliminate or decrease the need for abortion. One representative informed the panel that legalization of abortion in her country and expanded services has considerably reduced maternal deaths resulting from induced abortions. Another representative said that the development of medical technology has led to the over-treatment of pregnancy and childbirth in her country, resulting in an increase in Caesarean sections and an enormous waste of resources.

6. Representatives noted a growing demand for reproductive health services and access to a wide range of contraceptive methods, including the need for informed choice. Adolescent health, in particular teenage pregnancies, remain a serious preoccupation. With regard to male fertility regulation, it was noted with interest that attitudes are changing, and that younger men and couples are now volunteering for clinical trials. The pharmaceutical industry, which did not show interest in research in the 1980s given the lack of willingness of men to control their own fertility and the complicated and often toxic drugs and procedures, has recently become involved in studies on male contraception.

7. The burden of infertility on couples, in particular on women, was of concern to some representatives. Mention was made of the lack of information on the causes of infertility and the effects of biomedical research, including cloning. The physical, psychological and social effects of medically assisted reproduction technology on the health of women and the risks involved should not be underestimated.

8. Representatives were alarmed about the dramatic increase in HIV/AIDS infection among women, in particular the high risk for adolescents 15 to 25 years of age, who now represent half the recent HIV victims. Many representatives acknowledged the link between violence against women and HIV/AIDS infection. Infection in young girls is often related to violence, including forced sex and rape. Migration, trafficking and sexual exploitation contribute to the spread of the disease among young women. The taboos surrounding the disease and the stigmatization of the victims cause further violence and isolation. Of particular concern is mother-to-child infection and the dilemma of breastfeeding for HIV-positive mothers. Representatives called for greater protection of women from infection, including through access to the female condom, and improved treatment of HIV/AIDS patients through affordable access to anti-retroviral therapy and drugs. Reference was also made to the possible link between female genital mutilation and susceptibility to HIV/AIDS infection, despite a lack of research on this issue. Several speakers reported about campaigns and legal action taken for the eradication of harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation.

9. Representatives recognized the negative impact of violence on women's mental health, one of the major reasons for psychiatric disorders, anxiety and depression among women. Mental disorders in women seem to be caused more by social problems than by hormones and genes. It was suggested that mental health care be integrated into primary health-care services to make it more easily accessible. With regard to substance abuse, it was noted that women face discrimination in treatment and rehabilitation that are not gender sensitive. The increasing number of women smoking and their difficulties in abandoning the tobacco habit, as shown by research, is also of concern.

10. With regard to occupational and environmental health, a lack of attention to pollution and the risk factors of certain lifestyles was mentioned. Women's reaction to hazards at work include stress, trauma and physical reactions. It was underlined that occupational health regulations need to address women's health issues. Steps must be taken to safeguard the health of pregnant and breastfeeding working women.

11. It was noted that bridging the gap between policy and implementation and between awareness and attitudes is the real challenge at this stage. Representatives agreed that the creation of an enabling environment that includes a legislative framework and political commitment at the highest level is a prerequisite for effective social change and improvement in women's health. Several representatives informed the panel about modifications to the legal frameworks in their countries, which are beneficial to women's health. They relate to health insurance, patients' rights, health-care and social security systems. Progress was noted by several representatives in the collection of health statistics disaggregated by sex and age and the development of gender-specific indicators on health. The next step, as one representative pointed out, is the development of gender-specific indicators on quality of life and social and mental well-being.

12. Special emphasis was put on the importance of mainstreaming the gender perspective into all fields of health. This includes a focus on the role of men and the importance of partnership, in particular in reproductive health. A gender perspective should be integrated into medical education and research. This would also lead to changes in the health sector at the decision-making level, where women are still not a decisive presence. There is a need for more gender-sensitive training, but the unavailability of training materials, trainers and training opportunities represent a serious obstacle to creating greater gender sensitivity among health professionals and policy makers in particular.

B. Institutional mechanisms: moderator's summary

13. At its 7th meeting, on 4 March 1999, the Commission held a panel discussion, followed by a dialogue at its 8th meeting, on institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, one of the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). The panellists were Rounaq Jahan (Bangladesh), Senior Research Scholar at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, United States of America; Jaroslava Moserova (Czech Republic), Vice-Chair of the European Integration Committee at the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic; Glenda P. Simms (Jamaica), Executive Director of the Bureau of Women's Affairs of Jamaica; and Shirin M. Rai (India), Senior Lecturer in Politics and Women's Studies, University of Warwick, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

14. Representatives emphasized that national machineries, in order to carry out their functions, should be equipped with adequate human and financial resources and be located where they could effectively influence government policy, preferably at a high government level, and where they can be protected from frequent political changes. Staff of national machineries should have good management skills, training and good career perspectives. National machineries should establish strong networks within government and with non-governmental organizations, the research community and the private sector, and should have access to modern communication technology.

15. Representatives emphasized that in order to work as focal points for the promotion of women and the achievement of gender equality, national machineries should be embedded in the cultural, national and political context of their countries, as this would ensure their sustainability and legitimacy. However, they also agreed that sharing information and good practices beyond borders is crucial for strengthening national machineries. Therefore, national machineries should create or strengthen collaborative links with other institutions at the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels.

16. Many participants in the panel discussion and dialogue recalled that the Beijing Platform for Action identified gender mainstreaming as the main function of national

machineries. National machineries should act as catalysts for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes. National machineries should support the establishment of gender focal points in all ministries and other decision-making bodies and develop close cooperation with them to ensure effective gender mainstreaming in all sectors. Some speakers emphasized that national machineries may choose to engage in direct implementation of policies and specific projects. It was pointed out that their role in gender mainstreaming does not preclude the need for projects specific to women.

17. National machineries should adopt a participatory approach rather than playing a prescriptive role, and should decentralize their activities so as to ensure that the needs of their constituencies and the interests of the majority of women of all classes from all sectors, especially those living in poverty in both rural and urban areas, are addressed.

18. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women, policies and programmes specifically targeting institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women have been adopted and implemented in many countries. National legislation has been reviewed and modified in several countries to allow for the integration of gender mainstreaming into all policies and programmes and to ensure the elimination of gender discriminatory legislation.

19. Some representatives emphasized the need to bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation. Governments should demonstrate a strong political commitment to strengthening national machineries through providing sustainable human and financial resources, access to information technology and other tools through their national budgets and training programmes. Adequate resources would enhance the sustainability and ensure the effectiveness of national machineries in carrying out their work. One representative suggested that a certain percentage of budgets from various governmental agencies could be allocated to national machineries.

20. There was general agreement that national machineries should adopt a transparent and inclusive approach in fostering their relationships with non-governmental organizations, and wherever possible such relationships should be institutionalized. It was noted that since non-governmental organizations provide the necessary conduit to civil society, this would increase the linkage between civil society and government, which would in turn foster trust and accountability. However, national machineries must remain independent and autonomous, and should publish their annual reports as a means of providing accountability and ensuring their legitimacy.

21. Several speakers noted that national machineries should create and/or strengthen collaborative relationships with the private sector. This could include addressing such groups as trade unions, private enterprises and banks. National machineries should sensitize the private sector to gender equality through their advocacy role, in particular with regard to the labour market and the situation of women in this respect.

22. Many representatives agreed that national machineries should play an active role in facilitating cooperation between all agencies of government, non-governmental organizations, women's groups and other actors in civil society. This would enhance the collaboration of all actors, diminish the possibility of duplication of work, and provide for better utilization, coordination and leverage of limited resources by national machineries.

23. Some representatives stated that national machineries should engage the mass media in awareness-raising campaigns leading to the re-examination of existing gender prejudices and stereotypes, and should engage in efforts to change the traditional portrayal of both women and men.

24. Representatives emphasized the need for Governments and national machineries to incorporate the views of civil society in their reporting on gender and women's issues to

international bodies. They also stressed the need to document and publish "good practices" papers and develop gender-sensitive data and qualitative performance indicators, disaggregated by sex, to ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and implementation of programmes.

25. The need for systematic collection and analysis of statistical data on unremunerated work carried out by women was reiterated. Some suggestions were made to that effect. The Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat was requested to prepare and circulate among member States a detailed and structured questionnaire to address this issue. It was also suggested that a method of issuing tax rebates to families with dependent members without income, including the elderly and the disabled, be given attention. Another suggestion was made to include issues related to ageing women in all government reports, including those submitted under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and national action plans. Some representatives emphasized the need for research by both international and national organizations regarding the relationship between poverty, ageing and women.

26. Representatives further encouraged national machineries, whenever possible, to involve parliaments and the judiciary in reviewing and monitoring progress made in the implementation of the national and international commitments of Governments, including those related to the achievement of gender balance in all areas of government. It was emphasized that the balanced participation of women and men in all areas of decision-making would foster a participatory dialogue, transparency and sustainable development. Some experts also recommended that parliaments play a role in guaranteeing accountability of government through, for example, setting up coordinating committees to review progress in gender mainstreaming and scrutinizing gender-related aspects of all government reporting.

27. Participants also noted the negative impact of structural adjustment programmes and other financial crises, such as the Asian crisis, on the work of national machineries. Consequences of such crises included budget cuts, removal of subsidies and a reduction of the activities of national machineries by government. It was also pointed out that frequent economic and administrative restructuring and political instability interrupted the continuity of national machineries.

Annex II

Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Chairperson: Ms. Aloisia **Wörgetter** (Austria)

1. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/29 of 24 July 1995, the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women met as an in-session open-ended working group of the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session. By its decisions 1996/240 of 22 July 1996 and 1997/227 of 21 July 1997, the Council renewed the mandate of the Working Group so that it might continue its work, and authorized it to meet in parallel with the Commission at its forty-first session, and at its forty-second and forty-third sessions, respectively. The Council also decided to invite a representative of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to attend those meetings as a resource person.

2. Aloisia Wörgetter (Austria) continued to serve as Chairperson of the Working Group.

3. The Working Group met from 1 to 11 March 1999. It held three meetings (1st to 3rd) and a number of informal meetings. It had before it the following documents for information:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General containing an annotated comparison of the draft optional protocol and the amendments proposed thereto with the provisions of existing international human rights instruments, taking into account the report of the Working Group to the Commission at its forty-first session (E/CN.6/1998/7);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General containing a comparative summary of existing communications and inquiry procedures and practices under international human rights instruments and under the Charter of the United Nations (E/CN.6/1997/4);

(c) Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its eighteenth and nineteenth sessions;[a]

(d) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the results of the twentieth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (E/CN.6/1999/CRP.1).

4. At the 1st meeting, on 1 March, the Chairperson opened the meeting and made a statement.

5. At the same meeting, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women made an introductory statement.

6. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the Federal Minister for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, of Germany, on behalf of the European Union, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) and the associated country Cyprus as well as a country member of the European Free Trade Association that is also a member of the European Economic Association,

[a] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/53/38/Rev.1).

namely, Iceland, which aligned themselves with the statement. A statement was also made by the Director-General of the Department of Women's Affairs of Namibia.

7. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Liechtenstein, Romania, Japan, Canada, Norway, Lesotho, New Zealand, Ecuador, Australia, Zimbabwe, Switzerland, Turkey, the Philippines, Mexico, Algeria, Slovenia, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Egypt, Costa Rica, China, Sri Lanka, Ghana, India, the United States of America, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic.

8. Also at the same meeting, the Deputy Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women made a statement.

General exchange of views

9. At the 1st meeting, on 1 March, the Working Group, at the invitation of the Chairperson, held a general exchange of views on agenda item 6 of the Commission.

10. Delegations recalled that the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the General Assembly would be commemorated in December 1999. They considered that the adoption by consensus of the optional protocol would be a fitting way to commemorate this event, especially as 163 States were already parties to the Convention. It would also represent a concrete follow-up to the Platform for Action, which had called for the preparation of an optional protocol and for the Convention's universal ratification by the year 2000.

11. Delegations stressed that the optional protocol would strengthen implementation of the Convention and of the human rights of women. Delegations called for the completion of an instrument that would be effective and accessible to women, and would reflect the specificity of the Convention and the real situation of women, as well as of women's experiences of violations of human rights. They noted that in finalizing the optional protocol, the Working Group should be guided by principles including effectiveness for women, consistency with existing human rights instruments and the practice developed thereunder, the requirement of its practicality in the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the need for its clarity as a legal instrument.

12. Many delegations suggested that both a communications as well as an inquiry procedure should be included in the optional protocol, and that the range among those who could lodge complaints should be broad. Many delegations also noted that a specific provision prohibiting reservations to the optional protocol should be included. At the same time, it was stressed that the optional protocol should be accessible to the largest number of States parties. Delegations expressed confidence that the flexibility of all negotiating partners would ensure the successful conclusion of the work of the Working Group.

13. At the 2nd meeting, on 11 March 1999, interpretative statements were made by the representatives of Japan, Ghana (also on behalf of Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe), the Philippines, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Egypt, New Zealand, Algeria, Canada, Senegal, Cameroon, Germany (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the associated country Cyprus as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country Switzerland and the EFTA countries members of the European Economic Area (EEA), Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), Mali, Austria, Jordan, Denmark (also on behalf of Finland, Iceland and Norway) and Morocco.

14. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women.

15. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.

16. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of a number of non-governmental organizations.

17. At the 3rd meeting, on 11 March, interpretative statements were made by the representatives of the Netherlands, Costa Rica (also on behalf of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela), India, Tunisia, Italy, Cuba, Israel, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (also on behalf of Sweden).

18. At the same meeting, general statements were made by the representatives of Germany (on behalf of the Western European and Other States Group), Australia, Spain and Mexico.

19. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in her capacity as a resource person in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/227 of 21 July 1997.

20. At the same meeting, a statement was made by a representative of a non-governmental organization.

Action taken by the Working Group

Draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

21. At the 2nd meeting, on 11 March, the Working Group had before it the text of the revised draft optional protocol (E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.2), submitted by the Chairman on the basis of informal consultations held on the compilation text contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its forty-second session (E/1998/27), and the text of a draft resolution (E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.3) entitled "Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", submitted by the Chairperson on the basis of informal consultations.

22. At the same meeting, the Working Group adopted the draft optional protocol and its enabling resolution, and recommended their submission to the Commission on the Status of Women for consideration.

23. Before the adoption of the draft optional protocol, a statement was made by the representative of the Holy See.

24. At the 3rd meeting, on 11 March, the Working Group adopted its draft report (E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.1 and Add.1). It agreed that a compilation of the interpretative statements made after the adoption of the draft optional protocol and its enabling resolution would form part of its report.

Interpretative statements on the draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

25. The representatives of a number of countries made statements which they requested the Secretariat to place on record. Those statements, as submitted in writing by the representatives, are set out below.

Algeria

"Algeria fully associates itself with the view of the International Law Commission that the regime governing reservations set forth in the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties is, because of its flexibility, perfectly suited to the requirements of treaties, irrespective of their subject matter or nature, inasmuch as it establishes a balance between the goal of preserving the integrity of the text and the requirement of universality.

"The argument that some treaties, including those relating to human rights, should have their own set of specific reservations cannot be justified juridically, since the regime governing reservations must not be subject to any derogation and/or limitation. While it is true that Algeria agreed to an infringement of this principle in the case of the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, that is because of the optional and procedural character of the protocol and because Algeria had no wish to break the consensus.

"Accordingly, Algeria wishes to emphasize here that the fact that States are not allowed to formulate reservations should not set a precedent in relation to either the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties or the practice accepted thus far for becoming a party to an international instrument.

"Algeria considers that women's emancipation, although an extremely noble goal which is supports wholeheartedly, must not be utilized to justify a serious infringement of the norms and practice of international law. It hopes that the fact that there are no reservations will not deter States from becoming parties to the protocol, for which Algeria would like to see as broad and universal support as possible in view of the importance of the necessary improvement of the status of women."

Australia

"Australia will be taking the text away for further careful consideration and consultation at the domestic level. Australian domestic treaty-making procedures require a high level of consultation at the national level, including the involvement of Parliamentarians, State and Territory Governments within our Federal system and the wider community, before any steps can be taken toward becoming party to any new treaty. And naturally, this instrument will be subject to these procedures."

Austria

"The Austrian delegation associates itself with the statement presented by the Presidency of the European Union.

"In addition, Austria would like to stress that the Convention requires a State party not only to refrain from conduct that infringes directly on the rights but also to take positive measures to insure that a right set forth in the Convention can be effectively enjoyed.

"Therefore, the Austrian delegation takes the view that the Committee will accept communications concerning each and every substantive provision set forth in the Convention and will examine whether the State party has taken all necessary steps to fulfill the obligations as stipulated in the Convention. Thus, the Committee — in interpreting the term 'rights' referred to in article 2 of the optional protocol — could use as source of inspiration the case law of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

"Furthermore, the Austrian delegation is of the opinion that — during its examination of a communication — the Committee is free to place itself at the disposal of the parties concerned with a view to facilitating settlement of the matter on the basis of respect for the rights and obligations as defined in the Convention."

Cameroon

"The Cameroonian delegation associates itself with the delegations which have preceded it in commending you for the determination which you have displayed throughout the work of our Commission, a determination which has enabled us to reach an outcome that gives us cause for satisfaction today. Cameroon is bound to become a party to the optional protocol, just as it accepts the oversight mechanism for the implementation of the International Labour Organization instruments to which it is a party.

"As regards article 17 of the protocol, however, we can understand the misgivings expressed by some delegations, given that the principle of reservation is set forth in various international instruments, thereby endowing them with a degree of flexibility which permits States to ratify them while denouncing any provisions found troublesome.

"Everyone should understand, however, that we are dealing here with a special case: the advancement of women. We hope that the protocol will be widely disseminated at the national level, and that all who support the advancement of women and respect for their basic rights will recognize the merits of this protocol, including its article 17."

Canada

"Canada understands that an act or failure to act by a State party which gives rise to violations of rights or obligations under CEDAW may be the basis for a communication or inquiry pursuant to the protocol.

"With respect to the question of standing in article 2, Canada understands that the CEDAW Committee has the authority to determine the question of consent according to the particular circumstances of each case, and that the Committee should interpret article 2 in a way no less favourable than the existing practice and procedures of other human rights treaty bodies."

China

"The Government of China attaches great importance to the protection of women's rights and supports the efforts of the international community in eliminating discrimination against women, including the elaboration of an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The delegation of China hopes that the optional protocol would be widely accepted

by States with different social, cultural or historical background so as to contribute positively to the elimination of discrimination against women.

"On Article 2:

"Article 2 should ensure that victims will be able to submit communications to the Committee under that article, at the same time, it should also prevent totally irrelevant persons from taking advantage of the special situation of the victims for their own purposes by acting in the name of the victims. The delegation of China, therefore, is of the opinion that the will of the victims should be fully respected, and that their representatives, if any, should be from the same country as the victims.

"On Article 4:

"It is the general practice that politically motivated communications are inadmissible in other communication procedures concerning human rights in the framework of the United Nations. That is an important principle to protect human rights properly. And this principle should be equally applied to communication procedures under this protocol. In this respect, the delegation of China is of the opinion that the phrase of 'an abuse of the right to submit a communication' contained in subparagraph 4 of paragraph 2 of this article applies to communications submitted for political purpose.

"On Article 8:

"In view of the substantial amount of human and financial resources required to carry out the inquiry procedure, that procedure should apply only to cases where women's rights are seriously violated and on a massive scale. The delegation of China, therefore, understands that a single event of violation of women's rights should not constitute "grave or systematic violations" as described in paragraph 1 of this article.

"On Article 11:

"States parties to the protocol shall protect individuals against ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of communicating with the Committee pursuant to this protocol. However, States parties should implement this provision in the framework of their national law. And this provision shall not prevent States parties from taking legal action against those who have committed crimes or otherwise breached the law in the process of communicating with the Committee.

"On Article 13:

"The improvement of women's status involves efforts in various fields, including publicizing the protocol and the Convention. In view of this, developing countries have the right to allocate resources in the best interest of the women in their countries according to the specific situation of these countries.

"On Article 17:

"The Convention on the Law of Treaties contains clear provisions concerning reservations, which apply to human rights treaties adopted previously. The delegation of China is of the view that such provisions should also apply to the present protocol. However, in order to reach consensus in the working group, the delegation of China accepted a no-reservation clause in this protocol on the condition that such a clause should not constitute a precedent in drafting human right treaties in the future."

Costa Rica (also on behalf of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela)

"We make the following statement, taking as our framework the general principles of international law and the standards for the implementation of regional instruments for the protection of human rights:

"1. As regards article 2, it is our understanding that, when communications are submitted 'on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals', a broad-based approach will be taken in determining who will be entitled to submit such communications, in order to ensure effective access to justice;

"2. With respect to the question of consent, referred to in the second part of article 2, we assume that the personal, social and cultural conditions of women who have suffered the alleged violation of their rights will be taken into account;

"3. We take it that the term 'violation' in the first sentence of article 2 refers to omissions as well as acts of the State party. The same interpretation holds true for article 8;

"4. In article 4, the rule of exhaustion of domestic remedies will be understood as being of benefit to States and accordingly may be waived.

"We wish to emphasize the importance of incorporating the inquiry procedure in the optional protocol. The existence of such a procedure in the Inter-American system is proving its worth as a form of collaboration with States in the fulfilment of their international obligations.

"We end by stating that the efforts undertaken during the past few years with a view to the adoption of the optional protocol reflect the commitment of our States to improving the status of women and eliminating all forms of discrimination."

Denmark (also on behalf of Finland, Iceland and Norway)

"I speak on behalf of Finland, Norway, Iceland and Denmark. While fully associating ourselves with the statement made by the Presidency of the European Union, we would like to offer the following additional interpretative observations to the protocol that we have adopted today.

"From the outset of the negotiations three years ago, we have strongly supported the idea of giving NGOs a separate standing in the protocol, by including a reference to the NGOs in article 2, and allowing for the possibility that they in their own right could bring a communication to the attention of the Committee. While accepting that it was not possible to agree on this proposal, we nevertheless take comfort in the wording found in article 2, 'groups of individuals' which we take to mean that NGOs alleging to be victims of a violation can bring a communication to the attention of the Committee.

"Another issue that to our delegations has been of the utmost importance, has been the retention of the word 'provisions' in article 2 of the protocol. We take this to mean that the communication procedure as well as the inquiry procedure will encompass the full Convention, and that the Committee will accept communications concerning each and every substantive provision set forth in the Convention.

"We have taken great comfort in the converging statements to the effect that the word 'rights' in the text be interpreted in accordance with established practice from other human rights instruments and encompass the full Convention. In this connection, we should in particular like to refer to the CERD Convention, article 14, and the

practice of the CERD Committee. It is therefore our expectation that the CEDAW Committee when entertaining a communication or embarking on an inquiry procedure will uphold this broad and generally accepted interpretation. Only in so far as the Committee accepts the principle that obligations of the State confer rights on individuals and groups of individuals will the Committee be an effective instrument in the realization and promotion of the human rights of women by putting an end to discrimination against women in all its forms.

"Regarding article 9, paragraph 2, it is our view that the term 'inform' should be understood as a part of a process of interaction between the States Parties and the Committee under the inquiry procedure."

Egypt

"The delegation of Egypt hopes that the adoption of the draft optional protocol will be an important step in promoting the role of the General Assembly of the United Nations in enhancing the rule of law in the international community and in strengthening the rights of women at the threshold of the third millennium. At the same time, Egypt's delegation would like on this important occasion to state a number of positions of principle in the clearest possible terms.

"1. With regard to article 2, the delegation of Egypt stresses that allowing the submission of communications on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals, as this article does, must be conditional on their being exceptional and compelling circumstances in which it is not possible to obtain the consent of the victim to the submission of such communications. The term 'groups of individuals' means requiring that each individual in the group should be identified separately.

"2. With regard to paragraph 1 of article 8, the delegation of Egypt affirms the understanding that prevailed in the Working Group, namely that the reference to grave violations, using the plural form, means the repeated occurrence of such violations.

"3. With reference to article 11, the delegation of Egypt stresses that the duty of States to ensure that victims or their representatives submitting communications are not subjected to ill-treatment or intimidation should be within the limits set by national legislation.

"4. The delegation of Egypt has agreed to the inclusion of article 17 in view of the protocol's optional and procedural character, so that it cannot be adduced as a precedent.

"The delegation of Egypt requests that this statement be included in the official documents relating to the protocol."

Germany (on behalf of the European Union and associated countries)

"I have the honour to present this statement in relation to articles 2 and 8 of this optional protocol on behalf of the delegations of the member States of the European Union, and on behalf of the delegations of the Central and Eastern European countries association with the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the EFTA country of Switzerland and the EFTA countries members of the EEA, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway:

"(a) The delegations referred to above understand the second sentence of article 2 in the light of the practice of existing human rights treaty bodies, as reflected in their rules of procedure, namely the rules of procedure of the Human Rights Committee, rule 90 (b), the rules of procedure of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Rule 91 (b), and the rules of procedure of the Committee against Torture, Rule 107 (1) (b).

"(b) We, the delegations referred to above, in accordance with general principles of International Law, understand the reference to 'violation' in the first sentence of article 2 and the reference to 'violations' in the first paragraph of article 8 of any of the rights set forth in the Convention to include an act as well as a failure to act by the State Party concerned."

Ghana (also on behalf of Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe)

"We, like all other delegations, came to this meeting with our own national positions. We recognized that there was willingness among delegations to conclude work on the optional protocol during this session as well as a willingness to adopt the draft by consensus. Some of our delegations compromised our own positions in the interest of achieving such consensus. The draft we have adopted today is far from being a perfect text. It falls far beyond the threshold we would have liked to set for a mechanism that deals with matters as peculiar and far-reaching as providing legal remedies for violation of women's rights.

"Our main concern in the text is that article 2, as it is now worded could place the burden of proof on the victim. Considering the realities in our countries, and the fact that legal illiteracy is high, that the majority of women are not aware of their rights within their own national jurisdictions, let alone those contained in international human rights instruments. The article makes the accessibility to this optional protocol for these women even more difficult.

"Having said that, we would like to place on record our understanding of some of the articles contained in the optional protocol:

"Article 2:

"We understand that the question of consent would have been resolved through the exhaustion of domestic remedies and in any event would not preclude the victims of violations who may not be capable of giving legal consent from being represented.

"It is also our understanding that the second sentence of article 2 will be interpreted in the light of the practice of existing human rights treaty bodies, and that the Committee, when developing its own rules of procedure will take into account the peculiarities of the Convention.

"Article 8:

"The phrase 'grave or systematic' will be construed broadly so as not to impede the effective functions of the Committee.

"Article 9:

"The interpretation of this article will not preclude dialogue between the Committee and concerned States parties."

India

"In article 2, we recognize the need for a broad 'standing' to provide for cases of violations of rights or discrimination against women where women are not able to bring complaints to the Committee themselves for various reasons. Our understanding of this article is that, particularly where there exists a tradition of a civil society and rule of law, those acting on behalf of an alleged victim of the violations of the rights set forth in the Convention, should be able to demonstrate sufficient interest to justify acting on behalf of the victim. This would also mean that, except in the case of a legal counsel, the author should normally be a party involved in the process of seeking domestic jurisdiction. At any rate, the party should be able to demonstrate a standing association with the society concerned. We would interpret 'consent' as not acting contrary to the wishes of the victim and without violating her right to privacy should she so desire.

"In article 4 (1), 'unreasonably prolonged' should be interpreted in the light of the normal speed of justice in the country concerned. It should generally be able to establish that the delay itself is discriminatory. In article 4 (2), the Committee in interpreting subparagraphs (iii) and (iv) should guard itself, in particular, against insufficiently substantiated and politically motivated complaints, particularly when such motivation has an international character intended to exploit the procedure for ends unrelated to the protection of the rights of women.

"In seeking responses from States Parties, in article 7 (4), the Committee should take into account the logistical difficulties some, particularly developing, countries can face in obtaining information from far flung places and through various layers of language and case-history.

"On article 10, we have gone along with the 'opt-out' provision in a spirit of compromise. In our view, the protocol combines two distinct procedures, that of a 'complaints' mechanism and an 'inquiry' mechanism, that should really have been two separate protocols rather than one integral one. Alternatively, the inquiry mechanism could be regarded as an 'additional' protocol. An 'opt-in' procedure would have captured this 'additionality' or separate layer, better.

"We have no reservations to the protocol as finally drafted. For this reason, and because this protocol relates to women, we have been able to go along with article 17 on 'no reservations'. However, our willingness to deviate from the established conventions international law on this should not be seen as a compromise in principle and cannot be used as a precedent for any future instrument."

Indonesia

"I have the honour to express Indonesia's interpretation on the application of the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in particular concerning articles 2 and 11.

"First, I should like to state that the Indonesian delegation accepts the draft of the optional protocol as it stands, and that it is our earnest hope that the language of the draft will encourage the expeditious adoption and ratification of the optional protocol. In implementing article 2, I would like to note that it is the position of the Indonesian Government that it will adhere to the principle requiring the consent of the victims. In that regard, it is our view that victims must have the ability to choose for themselves whether or not to pursue redress through an international mechanism established by the United Nations under the optional protocol to the Convention on

the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This freedom of choice must be respected. Furthermore, in order for women to be fully informed of their rights, the Government, together with non-governmental organizations, have the responsibility to disseminate major United Nations human rights conventions and United Nations human rights supervisory mechanisms, including the mechanism under the optional protocol to the CEDAW.

"I would note that while draft article 2 establishes those procedures for individual communications to be received by the United Nations, with the consent of the victims, that there do exist other channels of communication outside of the optional protocol, such as procedure 1503 of the Commission on Human Rights, which do not call for the consent of the victims.

"We do recognize that there are situations which may arise where the consent of the victims cannot be obtained and there is need for application of the optional protocol. In such event, my delegation is of the view that interpretation of such events should be in conformity with the rules of procedure of existing human rights treaty bodies, namely the rules of procedure of the Human Rights Committee, rule 90 (b), the rules of procedure of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, rule 91 (b), and the rules of procedure of the Committee against Torture, rule 107 (1) (b).

"With regard to article 11, my delegation would like to note that it is in line with Indonesia's proactive policy in dealing with the promotion and protection of the human rights of women. The Government of Indonesia is committed to the protection of victims who come forward, through its draft legislation for witness protection which is now in the final stage of completion. In addition to that legislative measure, the Government of Indonesia, within the framework of technical cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at Geneva, will implement witness protection programme for the officials of the Office of the Attorney General and National Police. The Government fully realized the necessity to encourage the women victims to seek redress when their rights have been violated and to come forward as witness and give evidence in court so that law enforcement procedures can be fully applied, and the perpetrators of crimes be brought to justice.

"While fully respecting the rights of individuals or groups of individuals to exercise their rights under the optional protocol, we need to underline the obligation that national legislation must also be respected, which is in line with the thrust of article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"In closing, let me reiterate my delegation's strong desire to see the draft optional protocol be adopted and ratified at the earliest time, and to become an international effective instrument in the protection of the rights of women."

Israel

"We would like, respectfully, to offer certain clarifications regarding a few of the articles.

"First, regarding article 2, we interpret the requirement for consent of a 'group of individuals' on whose behalf a complaint has been filed to refer to the consent of each individual in the cited group.

"Second, in article 8, the phrase 'grave or systematic violations' refers, on our understanding, to exclude singular isolated incidents.

"In addition, the assignment in article 11 of a State's responsibility 'to ensure that individuals under its jurisdiction are not subject to ill-treatment or intimidation' applies strictly within the jurisdiction of the state in question.

"Finally, we wish to submit that the 'no reservations' clause in article 17 should not be a precedent for any future instrument."

Italy

"The Italian delegation associates itself with the statement presented by the Presidency of the European Union.

"We consider the protocol an historical achievement, because it gives women an important instrument to exercise their recognized human rights, even if my delegation would have preferred a stronger optional protocol.

"We are confident that the Committee jurisprudence will be open to a developing interpretation of the most controversial points, in the light of the practice of other human rights treaty bodies, and also of the peculiarity of the CEDAW Convention, which provides for a wider scope of social and cultural human rights than other international instruments.

"The Italian delegation understands that the formulation *groups of individuals* includes NGOs acting on their own capacity and not only on behalf of victims.

"Concerning the cases in which NGOs or other authors will act on behalf of victims, it is in our expectation that the Committee will adopt a broad interpretation of the provision enabling them to act without the consent of the victim, and accept a communication not only when it would be impossible but really difficult for victims to act personally or to give their consent.

"We cannot forget that wherever women's rights are seriously violated, women are detained, or tortured, or at risk of retaliation.

"The Italian delegation understands the term *rights* under article 2 as referring to all the substantive provisions set forth in the Convention, also concerning social and cultural achievements. Therefore we take the view that the Committee will accept a communication whenever it is related not only to a direct violation but also to a failure of a State to comply with an obligation set forth in the CEDAW Convention.

"We are aware that the adoption of the protocol is the result not only of the work of government representatives and legal experts but also of the pressure and mobilization of NGOs and women's movements.

"This places a major responsibility on our shoulders, to ensure speedy ratification of the protocol and effective enforcement of its provisions.

"We are convinced that women's movements which have worked with us for the protocol will continue to work to make it a stronger instrument for a full implementation of women's human rights."

Japan

"The delegation of Japan wishes to make interpretative statement on the following points:

"Article 2:

"The phrase 'on behalf of' is interpreted in light of the practices already established under the rules of procedures of other human rights instruments. It is also my delegation's understanding that the term 'groups of individuals' is being used so as to indicate that each individual in a group is identified.

"Article 8:

"An inquiry procedure, which is conducted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women upon its receipt of reliable information indicating grave or systematic violations by a State party to this protocol of rights set forth in the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination against Women, shall not be conducted for individual and accidental cases.

"Article 11:

"This article intends to protect individuals who communicated with the Committee either under article 2 or under article 8, but a State party to this protocol that makes a declaration under article 10 shall not have any such obligation under article 11 with regard to individuals communicating with the Committee under article 8."

Jordan

"Jordan wishes to express its continued and serious concern with article 17 relating to reservations. In this form adopted by the Working Group, article 17 precludes reservations to the optional protocol. Jordan believes that article 17 within the context and nature of the protocol not only has the potential to discourage ratification efforts of this protocol but also runs contrary to the well established practice of 'permitting' appropriate reservations in all non-restrictive multilateral treaties as coded in articles (19–23) of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. Jordan, like many States, regards the Convention rules, in their entirety, as stating custom as underscored by the European Commission on Human Rights in the Temeltasch Case.

"Article 19 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties articulates the general permissibility of a State to formulate a reservation notwithstanding the exceptional cases listed by the article 19 of the aforementioned convention, including article 19 (a), which precludes a State from formulating a reservation if the treaty prohibits the reservation which article 17 of this protocol seems to be based on.

"In this regard, we do not hold the view that the integrity of the protocol would have been affected in the absence of a prohibition on reservations or that there is compelling necessity that the optional protocol prohibit reservations. The optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Protocol Instituting a Conciliation and Good Offices Commission to be responsible for seeking a settlement of any dispute which may arise between States Parties to the Convention Against Discrimination in Education, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination are only examples of this practice. Any exception should show compelling considerations of mutual interests being affected if reservations were permitted, as the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea and the recent ICC Rome Statute clearly demonstrated. We view non-restrictive multilateral treaties as being generally governed by this 'permissive' practice with no categorized exceptions, including universal human rights treaties and procedural instruments, to achieve those rights.

"The integrity of any non-restrictive multilateral treaty or protocol would only be materially affected if a reservation of a substantial kind were to be formulated which renders it incompatible with the object and purpose of the treaty coded in article 19 (c) of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

"My delegation, ultimately views, and I quote from the commentary of the International Law Commission 1966, that '*what is essential to ensure both the effectiveness and the integrity of the treaty is that a sufficient number of states should become parties to it, accepting the great bulk of its provisions*'. We view that in the present era of diversity and change and of challenge of traditional concepts, the rule calculated to promote the widest possible acceptance of common agreement and expressed in a multilateral instrument may be the one better suited to the immediate needs of the international community which allows for 'qualified permissibility' and maintains progressive development towards the eventual elimination of compelling conditions that rendered reservations on the national level. In the spirit of constructive compromise, my delegation did not want to break consensus but stresses that the adoption of article 17 should not constitute a precedent in the future."

Morocco

"The Moroccan delegation stresses that the interpretation of the provisions of the Protocol will be subordinated to absolute respect for the sovereignty of Morocco and its moral and spiritual values and to the compatibility of those provisions with the Constitution of Morocco."

Netherlands

"1. The Netherlands delegation is of the opinion that the draft optional protocol to the women's Convention that we just adopted provides a sound legal basis for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to further enhance its role in the protection of women's human rights. The communications procedure and the inquiry procedure which are contained in the optional protocol are important means, as experience has shown with other global and regional human rights treaties. These procedures give more substance and meaning to the provisions of the women's Convention in situations most needed.

"2. From the practice of other international human rights treaty bodies, it is evident to the Netherlands delegation that the admissibility criteria contained in article 4, paragraph 2, subparagraph iii (manifestly ill-founded or not sufficiently substantiated) are concrete illustrations of the general admissibility criterion contained in article 4, paragraph 2, subparagraph ii, which provides that a communication should be compatible with the provisions of the Convention."

New Zealand

"New Zealand welcomes adoption of the text of the optional protocol.

"New Zealand would like to place on the record its understanding of Article 2.

"Our understanding is that this article is to be interpreted by reference to the current practice of other human rights treaty bodies in relation to communications procedures."

Philippines

"On the substantive aspects of the optional protocol, my delegation would like to stress the following points:

"1. We understand article 2 in light of existing practices of human rights treaty bodies contained in their rules of procedure. In article 2, the justification of an author to act on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals must take into consideration the structural contexts of women's lives — the political, social, economic and cultural constraints and obstacles in women's public and private lives. These structural constraints place women in situations where they may not be able to exercise their rights fully much less give their consent in crisis and emergency cases. We therefore broadly interpret the circumstances justifying an author acting on behalf of a victim to include some of these circumstances:

- Where women at risk are illiterate and have no legal capacity to represent themselves;
- Detention or confinement;
- Risk of ill treatment, intimidation or reprisals.

Where a complaint is made on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals, such complaints may be made by NGOs such as women's groups and human rights organizations which are already protecting and defending women's human rights on the ground in many countries.

"2. On article 8 (1), we understand the term 'grave' to be distinct from systemic and imposes no higher standard than 'serious' violations.

"3. In both article 2, and 8 (1) we interpret violation of any rights set forth in the Convention as inclusive of all of the provisions and obligations under the Convention as a whole and not parts of it, namely articles 2–16 and enunciated in article 24 of the Convention.

"My delegation has always felt that although all of us here are representing our Governments, it is really on behalf of the women in our respective countries, especially the most marginalized, vulnerable, oppressed and silenced women, that we are dedicating this work on the optional protocol. Finally, let me express my delegation's grateful thanks and appreciation to the women's groups and NGOs that have been with us all these years, giving us both valuable information and inspiration to carry on."

Russian Federation

"The delegation of the Russian Federation has joined the consensus on the draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

"At the same time, we believe that retaining the current wording of article 17 will render ratification of the optional protocol by a large number of States difficult, thereby significantly reducing the effectiveness of this international instrument, which must really protect the rights of women on a universal basis."

Tunisia

"I should like, on behalf of my country, to convey our warm thanks to the Working Group and its Chairperson, as well as to the Coordinator, for the efforts made

by one and all to ensure agreement on the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

"While Tunisia stresses the importance of the protocol in promoting the rights of women and ensuring respect for such rights in practice in order to bring parity and equality of opportunity, it considers that the protocol can only be ratified within the framework of respect for constitutional legality in each country and for each country's national sovereignty.

"I request that this statement be included in the record of the meeting."

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (also on behalf of Sweden)

"I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegation of the United Kingdom and also on behalf of the delegation of Sweden.

"We understand article 6, paragraph 1, of the protocol to mean that in cases where the individual or individuals refuse consent to the disclosure of their identity to the State Party, the Committee may not continue to consider their communication under articles 2 to 7 of the protocol.

"The Committee may, of course, take into account the information received with the communication, if it is relevant to its other functions, for example those under article 8 of the protocol and under article 20 of the Convention.

* * *

"The representative of Germany made a statement earlier today on behalf of all the member States of the European Union and the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union as well as the other delegations listed in his statement. I have the honour to have been asked to add the following observations on behalf of the same delegations.

"Having listened with great interest to the statements made by other delegations today, we have been struck by the number of recurring themes. We are particularly pleased to note the widely shared view that this optional protocol provides procedures for the enforcement of the human rights of women which are in no way less effective than the procedures available in other human rights instruments; indeed that its provisions build on those existing instruments and should be interpreted in the light of the rules of procedure and the evolving practice and experience of the other human rights treaty bodies.

"We believe that in turn the CEDAW Committee, in exercising its functions under this protocol, will make a valuable contribution to the development of international human rights law."

United States of America

"The United States of America wishes to record its continued and serious concern with article 17 relating to reservations. Article 17 has the potential to discourage ratification efforts and is contrary to the well established practice of permitting appropriate reservations."

Annex III

Attendance

Members*

Belgium	André Adam, Dirk Wouters, Ariadne Petridis, Lily Boeykens, M. P. Paternottre, Mme. Joly, Martha Franken, Annie de Wiest
Bolivia	Elizabeth Zuñiga Achá
Brazil	Enio Cordeiro, Marcela M. Nicodemos
Chile	Juan Larraín, Teresa Rodriguez, Eduardo Tapia, Catalina Infante, Carola Muñoz
China	Shen Shuji, Shen Guofang, Zou Xizoqiao, Meng Xianying, Yu Wenzhe, Cai Sheng, Yuan Xiaoying, Sun Ang, Huang Shu, Sun Changqing, Li Tingting
Côte d'Ivoire	Léopoldine Tiezan Coffie, Diénébou Kaba Camara, Marie-Claire Ade, Roland Serge Bony, Edgarde Manlan Ahounou
Cuba	Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Magalys Arocha Domínguez, Mercedes de Armas García, Rodolfo Reyes Rodríguez, Margarita Valle Camino, Ana Milagros Martínez Rielo, Rita María Pereira Ramirez
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Li Hyong Chol, Choe Myong Nam
Dominican Republic	Cristina Aguiar, Gladys Gutierrez, Irma Nicasio, Emilia Guzman, Julia Tavares de Alvarez, Lourdes Salcedo, Elda Cepeda, Marlene Boves Arroyo, Sobeida Cepeda, Sergia Galvan
Egypt	Maged Abdelaziz, Lamia Mekhemar, Nada Deraz, Yehia Oda
Ethiopia	Tadelech Haile Mikael, Fesseha A. Tessema, Bogalech Alemu Reta, Lulit Zewdie
France	Françoise Gaspard, Brigitte Gresy, Caroline Mechin, Feriel Kachoukh, Michèle Dubrocard, Emmanuelle Ducos, Michèle Baherle, Béatrice d'Huart, Marine de Carné, Didier Le Bret
Germany	Christine Bergmann, Gerhard Henze, Marion Thielenhaus, Johannes-Wilhelm Roehrig, Brigitte Unger-Soyka, Ulrike Fremerey, Renate Augstein, Bernhard Franke, Fiederike Kirner, Waltraud Dahs, Angelika Diggins-Roesner, Gudrun Graichen-Drueck, Uta Niemann-Jordan, Matthias Weckerling, Ursula Sottong, Daniela Nowak, Holger Mahnicke, Achim Holzenberger, Patricia Flor, Peter Felten, Beatrix Brodkorb
Ghana	Molly Anim-Addo, Charlotte Abaka, Mary Grant, Marian A. Tackie, Mary Arday-Kotei, Beatrice Ashong, Ama Benyiwa-Doe, Beatrice Rosa Brobbey

* Burundi was not represented at the session.

India	Kamalesh Sharma, Kiran Aggarwal, Mridula Sinha, Gautam Mukhopadhaya, Atul Khare
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Zahra Shojaie, Bagher Asadi, Peymaneh Hastehi, Esmaeil Afshari, Afsaneh Nadipour, Masoumeh Raghebi, Shideh Shadloo
Italy	Laura Balbo, Francesco Paolo Fulci, Tulio Guma, Maurizio Pavesi, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Clara Collarile, Vittoria Tola, Chiara Ingrao, Pia Locatelli, Marisa Rodano, Paola Ortensi, Laura Cima, Alessandra Bocchetti, Lucia Graziana Delpierre, Jociaria Lima De Oliveira, Rosario Alberto De Stefano, Bianca Pomeranzi
Japan	Yoriko Meguro, Takeshi Kamitani, Misako Kaji, Yoshiko Ando, Ikuko Arimatsu, Yumiko Kawano, Junko Ochi, Yuko Suzuki, Takako Ito, Yoshiko Niino, Kazuko Takabatake, Kae Ishikawa
Lebanon	Hassan Najem, Fadi Karam, Taline Buchakjian
Lesotho	Lipuo Moteetee, Phakiso Mochochoko
Lithuania	Irena Degutienė, Oskaras Jusys, Audra Mikalauskaitė, Rasa Ostrauskaitė
Malaysia	Mariah Haji Mahmud, Azlan Man, Sharifah Zarah Syed Ahmad, Fatimah Hamid Don
Mali	Diarra Afsétou Thiero, Moctar Ouane, Issouf Oumar Maiga, Illakamar Ag Oumar
Mexico	Aída González Martínez, Dulce María Sauri Riancho, María Antonieta Monroy Rojas, Blanca Esponda, Matilde García Verástegui, Claudia Aguilar Fernández
Mongolia	Badarchiin Suvd, Tsogt Nyamsuren, Oidov Enkhtuya
Morocco	Ahmed Snoussi, Aicha Kabbaj, Aicha A. Afifi, Naoual Jouihri, Jamila Alaoui
Norway	Inger Johanne Wremer, Merete K. Wilhelmsen, Sissel Salomon, Susan Eckey, Bjørg Skotnes, Åsmund Eriksen, Anne Lise Ryel, Sigrun Møgedal, Else Skjønsberg, Svanhild Nessa
Paraguay	Haydée Carmagnola de Aquino, Hugo Saguier Caballero, Martha Moreno
Peru	Francisco A. Tudela, Daúl Matute, Alfredo Chuquihuara, Rocio Villanueva Flores, Nancy Tolentino
Poland	Zbigniew Matuszewski, Katarzyna Mazela, Aleksandra Duda, Piotr Ogonowski, Dariusz Karnowski
Republic of Korea	Suh Dae-won, Chang Sung-ja, Bae Young-han, Ma Young-sam, Suh Myung-sun, Lee Bok-sil, Kim Eu-jeong, Lee Hyun-joo, Kim Jung-sook, Choi Young-hee, Lee Seung-hee
Russian Federation	V. I. Matvienko, G. N. Karlova, T. I. Stukolova, G. V. Gulko, N. A. Ostankina, N. B. Najgovzina, O. U. Sepelev, A. A. Nikijorov, K. M. Barskij, G. N. Galkina
Rwanda	Mrs. Fatuma Ndangiza
Saint Lucia	Sarah L. Flood, Julian R. Hunte, R. Sonia Leonce-Carryl

Senegal	Aminata Mbengue Ndiaye, Ibra Deguène Ka, Mankeur Ndiaye, Maïmouna Diop, Khady Fall Ndiaye, Maïmouna Sourang Ndir, Mame Bassine Niang, Maty Diaw, Mame Dieynaba Leye, Fatou Alamine Lo, Khardiata Lo Ndiaye
Slovakia	Daniela Rozgoňová, Eva Kimliková, Zuzana Vranová, Zuzana Jezerská
Sri Lanka	John de Saram, Kamala Irene Wickremansinghe, Ranjith Uyangoda
Sudan	Elfatih Erwa, Mubarak Rahmtalla, Khadiga Abulgasim Hag Hamad, Attiatt Mustafa Abdel Halim, Shahira Hassan Ahmed Wahbi, Ilham Ibrahim Mohamed Ahmed
Swaziland	Joel M. Nhleko, Nonhlanhla P. Mlangeni, Melusie M. Masuku
Thailand	Saisuree Chutikul, Apirath Vienravi, Miss Chaksuda Chakkaphak
Turkey	Şenay Eser, Ahmet Arda, Selma Acuner, Nevin Şenol, Feride Acar, Ayşe Akin
Uganda	Geraldine Bitamazire, Maggie Mabweijano, Jack Wamai
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Jay of Paddington, William Connon, Jo Gibbons, Fiona Merrill Reynolds, Margaret Mair, Ann Wilsdon, Jeremy Astill-Brown, Jill Barrett, Joan Smythe, Valerie Evans, Teresa Harper, Janet Veitch, Julia Chambers, Andrea Murray, Vicky Lea, Tony Kingham, Emma Spicer, Phil Evans, Miss Amy Kilpatrick, Anne Kilpatrick, Marisa Astill-Brown, Peter Gooderham, Pat Holden, Susan Hewer, Michelle Ridley, Ian Morley
United States of America	Linda Tarr-Whelan, Betty King, Theresa Loar, Carolyn Becraft, Kathryn Higgins, Sally Shelton-Colby, E. Michael Southwick, Seth Winnick, Alexandra Arriaga, Anita Botti, Paul Degler, Marina Gonatas, Nancy Hendry, Margaret Kerry, Sharon Kotok, Sarah Kovner, Susan O'Sullivan, Margaret Pollack, David Shapiro, Lidia Soto-Harmon, Robin Leeds, Jenny Luray, Kathleen Hendrix, Julia Scott, Suzanne Kindervatter

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Bhutan, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Monaco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Non-member States represented by observers

Holy See, Switzerland

Entity maintaining a permanent observer mission to the United Nations

Palestine

United Nations

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Joint and Co-Sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Development Fund for Women

Specialized agencies and related organizations

International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Intellectual Property Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Intergovernmental organizations represented by observers

Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, Council of Europe, European Community, International Organization for Migration, Organization of American States, Organization of the Islamic Conference

Non-governmental organizations

A large number of non-governmental organizations that either are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or had been accredited to the Fourth World Conference on Women also attended the session

Annex IV

List of documents before the Commission at its forty-third session

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/CN.6/1999/1	2	Provisional agenda and annotations
E/CN.6/1999/2 and Add.1	3 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
E/CN.6/1999/3	3 (b)	Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Gender and ageing: problems, perceptions and policies"
E/CN.6/1999/4	3 (c)	Report of the Secretary-General on the thematic issues before the Commission on the Status of Women
E/CN.6/1999/5	3 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat
E/CN.6/1999/6	3 (a)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting a report by the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/166 on the role of the Fund in eliminating violence against women
E/CN.6/1999/7	3 (c)	Letter dated 16 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations transmitting two documents concerning the work of the Council of Europe in the fields of equality between women and men and gender mainstreaming
E/CN.6/1999/8	2	Letter dated 9 February 1999 from the President of the Economic and Social Council transmitting an excerpt from Council resolution 1999/1
E/CN.6/1999/9	4	Letter dated 25 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations transmitting the report of the European Conference on Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.1	6	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the results of the twentieth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.2	3 (a)	Note by the Secretary-General on the proposed programme of work in the field of advancement of women for the biennium 2000–2001
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.3	3 (a)	Note by the Secretary-General containing a preliminary executive summary of the 1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.4	3 (c)	Summary submitted by the moderator of the panel discussion on women and health (Ms. Patricia Flor)
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.5	5	Report of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.6	3 (c)	Summary submitted by the moderator of the panel discussion on institutional mechanisms (Ms. Nonhlanhla P. L. Mlangeni)
E/CN.6/1999/L.1	2	Note by the Secretariat on the status of documentation for the session
E/CN.6/1999/L.2 and Rev.1	3 (c)	Draft and revised draft agreed conclusions on women and health submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission
E/CN.6/1999/L.3 and Rev.1	3 (c)	Draft and revised draft agreed conclusions on institutional mechanisms submitted by the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission
E/CN.6/1999/L.4	8	Draft report of the Commission on its forty-third session
E/CN.6/1999/L.5	3 (a)	Draft resolution entitled "Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts", submitted by Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Ecuador, Georgia, Guatemala, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, South Africa, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe
E/CN.6/1999/L.6	3 (c)	Draft resolution entitled "Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome", submitted by Zambia on behalf of the Group of African States
E/CN.6/1999/L.7	3 (a)	Draft resolution entitled "Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan", submitted by Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America
E/CN.6/1999/L.8	3 (c)	Draft resolution entitled "Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups", submitted by Kenya, Panama, Philippines, Thailand and Zambia

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/CN.6/1999/L.8/Rev.1	3 (c)	Revised draft resolution submitted by Botswana, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Namibia, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Thailand, Ukraine, Venezuela and Zambia
E/CN.6/1999/L.9	3 (c)	Draft resolution entitled "Palestinian women", submitted by Guyana on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China
E/CN.6/1999/L.10	3 (a)	Draft resolution entitled "System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002–2005", submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission
E/CN.6/1999/L.11	2	Draft decision entitled "Enabling the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to carry out its mandate", submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission
E/CN.6/1999/L.12	7	Note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional agenda and documentation for the forty-fourth session of the Commission
E/CN.6/1999/L.13	2	Draft decision entitled "Extraordinary meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women", submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission
E/CN.6/1999/SW/COMM.LIST/33 and Add.1	5	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the confidential list of communications concerning the status of women
E/CN.6/1999/CR.35	5	Note by the Secretary-General summarizing the non-confidential communications concerning the status of women received by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat
E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.1 and Add.1	6	Draft report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.2	6	Revised draft optional protocol, submitted by the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on the basis of informal consultations held on the compilation text contained in the report of the Commission on its forty-second session

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.3	6	Draft resolution, entitled "Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", submitted by the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention, Aloisia Wörgetter (Austria), on the basis of informal consultations
E/CN.6/1999/NGO/1	3 (c)	Statement submitted by the International Federation of University Women, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council
E/CN.6/1999/NGO/2	3 (b)	Statement submitted by the International Federation on Ageing, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council
E/CN.6/1999/NGO/3	3 (b)	Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council
E/CN.6/1999/NGO/4	3 (c)	Statement submitted by Bahá'í International Community, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council
E/CN.6/1999/NGO/5	3 (c)	Statement submitted by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council
E/CN.6/1999/NGO/6	3 (c)	Statement submitted by Zonta International, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council
E/CN.6/1999/NGO/7	3 (c)	Statement submitted by the Global Alliance for Women's Health, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

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